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**Comparative dimensions of social housing in Århus and Newcastle, 1890s – 1979:
the problem of the political culture of two social housing systems.**

LORNA COLBERG GOLDSMITH

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
University of Northumbria at Newcastle
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the School of Arts and Social Sciences

May 2007



You, Dear Woman, have no help.
Dailies are expensive or don't exist.
Your daughters go to school,
your aunts live their own lives
and in addition you have become an outgoing
[working] woman yourself.

BUT, Dear Woman,
you still almost live as your ...[portraits of
ancestors]...It won't do.
We are going to build and you,
Dear Woman,
must choose your housing according to your
way of life.

For the woman at home e.g. Søgården,
Sorgenfri Vang.
For the working woman e.g. Søndergårds
Park, Høje Søborg

Poster from the *Woman and Home* exhibition,
1953, Copenhagen.

Reproduced in Olaf Lind and Jonas Møller, *Boligfolk,
folkebolig. Politik og praksis i boligbevægelsens
historie*, Cph.: Boligselskabernes Landsforening, 1994

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. The research of primary and secondary material was undertaken by myself in Denmark and in Britain.

I also confirm that I have completed an appropriate training programme in agreement with the School Research Committee and in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

Signature:

Date:

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors Bill Lancaster and David Byrne for their support in reading and commenting on the thesis. Erik Nygaard at the Architect School in Århus has kindly given freely of his time, during a period of study in Denmark. Staff and friends at the University of Northumbria, in particular Don McRaid and Avram Taylor have taken time to listen and consider themes during work in progress.

In order to attend to research in Denmark I received two generous scholarships for which I am extremely grateful. Funding from the Anglo-Danish Society and the Andreas Jepsens scholarship have both underpinned my material welfare alongside the research studentship provided by the University of Northumbria.

The research for the thesis would have been impossible to undertake without the help of staff at the libraries and archives that I visited during the course for my travels through research. The following have especially been supportive and generous with their time – in Denmark: staff at Erhvervsarkivet, Lokalhistorisk Samling, Statsbiblioteket in Århus; Boligselskabernes Landsforening's journalist section, Olaf Lind, staff at Brabrand Boligforening, Boligforeningen Vesterbo, Boligforeningen Højbo, Aabyhøj Boligforening, Boligforeningen Ringgaarden, Claus Navntoft at the City Architect's Office, Århus Town Hall. In Britain: staff at the Local Studies Collection, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear Archives, the PRO and John Viet Wilson. My friend Charlie Fisher has patiently read and made valuable comments on chapters, and I am grateful for his suggestions.

And lastly I would like to send my warmest thank you to Simon MacLeod, my husband, who has been there to listen and encourage.

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Abbreviations

NCCM Newcastle City Council Minutes

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Introduction

Denmark....being a much smaller country than Britain, has, in absolute terms, a smaller housing problem. Nevertheless, there are surely lessons to be learned from the highly successful system which the Danish people and Government have worked out for themselves. A housing society, or some equivalent organization, provided for each separate region or sub-region in Great Britain might offer a solution to the difficult [sic.] that design for our working-class housing is under the controls of councils of very varying degrees of technical knowledge, which then have to be prodded and supervised to some extent by various Government departments. The housing society seems an admirable compromise, provided that it can be kept on the completely non-profit making basis that is successfully secured in Denmark.

Ian Bowen, Housing Policy in Denmark, *The Architects' Journal*, August 4, 1949, p.133

A generation of competent technicians and fearless, idealistic politicians [in Britain] have been able to make a contribution which will persist as a good example of the capabilities of the present and as an incomparable field of study for others who are working in planning.

Aage Jedich, Report from Holme-Tranbjerg Council Committee's visit to England, 12.07.1963¹

A comparison of the housing provided by two cities within separate nation states may encourage a mutually admiring gaze from each position. Comparisons have provided a tool in learning about new housing practices, understanding one's own position from a different vantage point and throwing light on areas that may have remained unquestioned until a visit abroad revealed different approaches to a similar problem. As the quotes above suggest, professional groups involved in the provision of housing and urban planning in post-war Denmark and Britain held each other's national strategies in high regard as they contemplated their local problems of creating spaces for effective urban communities. It will become clear for the cities studied in this thesis that local councillors, public officials and social housing providers at times sought to explore the wider areas of learning that practices abroad could offer.

Yet the main approach adopted in this thesis is the comparative historical approach: the thesis studies the origins and history of social housing systems in Århus, Denmark, and Newcastle, Britain. The comparison creates contrasts and similarities between the two

cities through an urban social history approach. The key theme explored in the work is the notions of local democratic culture arising within the social housing systems of the two cities covering most of the twentieth century, but with an emphasis on the period 1945-1979. The introduction will discuss themes running through the work and will consider how the structure of the thesis allows for the comparison to illuminate aspects of the local political culture of the two cities that was directly affected by and affected in turn the local provision of social housing.

Like most Western European cities in the twentieth century Århus and Newcastle faced the problems of providing adequate housing for large groups of working people as the cities grew or older housing types became outdated. The study examines the options and strategies that were explored and adopted by the housing authorities in the two cities to recover from slumps in housing provision. It is clear that each city approached housing provision through different groups of facilitators: in Århus, as in Denmark in general, the housing association was the primary generator of social housing, while Newcastle followed the British pattern – providing social housing through the municipality. Thus the agency of provision was different in the two cases from the outset. How the mediating influence of housing associations between the Århusian Council and residents in social housing contrasted with the direct provision of council housing in Newcastle is a key issue for the thesis.

Both Århus and Newcastle lay in nation states that have been treated in the historiography of their respective housing policies as distinct, although some universalising comparisons suggest that as part of Western capitalist nations social housing in Denmark and Britain shared over-arching models of development.² Britain's social housing history is, however, perceived to be particular in the European context due to its early adoption of state and local authority managed housing, and Newcastle Council played a key role in the local context. For its part Denmark may be seen as providing housing in a format closer to a Northern European corporate model. But within Europe Scandinavia seems to be located within a particularly social democratic realm. Yet while Sweden has continued to be of interest to comparativists of housing and welfare policies, there have been fewer studies taking Denmark as an exemplar of Scandinavian welfare provision.³ As a Scandinavian urban welfare state its social housing policies seem in the early twentieth century to develop out of collaborations between municipal socialist cities such as Århus and co-

operative housing associations initiated by the Labour movement, a sign maybe, that Danish welfare society was uniquely underpinned by strong municipal currents, at least before the Second World War.⁴ Thus the differences between Århus and Newcastle are many and significant. It is the contention of the thesis here, that as long as one defines the comparative cases as unique entities such as the cities of Århus and Newcastle their distinctions are enhanced, and the thesis for the most part takes this position. However it will also become clear from later discussions in the thesis that pure juxtaposition of cases in comparison can be negotiated through shifts in the line of historical questioning towards studies of cultural and policy transfer processes.

Themes in the thesis

The thematic threads of the present project centre around the key questions of: In what ways the two social housing systems took the forms they did, i.e. what were the origins and initiators of the local social housing provision in Århus and Newcastle? As the origins came to affect the subsequent historical paths of the social housing systems in the two cities, what factors affected their changes over time - what were the relationships between the social actors within and outside the social housing systems that left their imprint on their respective histories? As the Danish social housing history has been dominated by the presence of the social housing association as a central player in this history, the democratic potential of these relatively small providers, as mediators between residents and local and national government, has become the core of a question that runs through the present comparison:⁵ What were the democratic-cultural mechanisms for managing social housing in the two cities? What role did certain individuals, groups and institutions play within the two social housing systems, what were their self-perceptions and relationships, and what were the sources of questions that arose to comment on such self-perceptions? It will become clear that since the focus of the thesis is the notion of democratic culture arising in social housing the view is almost exclusively on this sector. The spheres of private renting and home-owning play a less significant role in this. It is the positions and self-perceptions of the public and not-for-profit housing authorities that are the central anchors around which questions in the thesis arise.

The history of social housing in Denmark and Britain has commonly been linked to the history of the individual nation state, even with a burgeoning comparative housing literature that seeks to widen the perspective to the international stage through

comparison.⁶ Local authorities and the Labour movement become key actors in these narratives, and in the Danish case relate closely to the so-called third sector: the sphere of voluntary agencies working to improve housing conditions for those in need.⁷ Non-profit making housing associations (*almennyttige boligforeninger*) were accountable to the state and municipalities, but with a high degree of autonomous control of budgets, design and management processes within localities in the city. When the National Federation of Danish Housing Associations (NFDHA) published its report, *Fremtidens Boligvæsen* (The Nature of Housing in the Future) in 1946 for a future Danish society in peacetime, it was concerned not only with its status as representing the labour interests of the building industry, nor was its sole concern the quality of domestic architecture and town planning, or social housing's position in the Danish economy. It represented itself as upholding the domestic interests of working people generally, as a body representing social housing associations who would work with the state and local government to provide healthy modern housing, but also healthy homes in a democratic culture. Housing was an ideal cornerstone for establishing democracy in Danish social life: 'As the dwelling.....is one of the most important factors in determining human life, there must be limits to how great differences a healthy democracy can tolerate in this area.'⁸ Whether this promise was fulfilled is a question that is raised as the thesis progresses.

Similar notions were also held by spokes-people for housing in post-war Britain. Architects, planners and civic leaders espoused the social responsibility of their professions and civic roles, hoping to deploy design in the education of citizens and facilitate the formation of democratic communities in urban design.⁹ By working for progressive, Labour-led Councils such as the London County Council, the politics of municipal housing was married to the social intentions of modern architecture and housing design, such as the system built estates of the 1960s, that have since been contested as viable social communities.¹⁰ In Newcastle local politicians, planning and housing managers at times echoed such intentions of an improved city for the majority of their citizens. How these intentions compared with the Danish case will be considered in the thesis.

Thus broad questions in the thesis are brought to bear on the relatively modest cases of Århus and Newcastle. Questions of the role of the political culture within the realm of social housing in Århus and Newcastle are placed in the context of the local social and

cultural stage that saw residents, their representatives and the public-professional bodies as key actors. Questions of the role of resident or tenant participation were raised during long periods of the twentieth century, and have in the last 10-15 years received renewed attention in both Britain and Denmark as housing authorities consider their roles in civil society.¹¹ The periodisation of the thesis covers the 1890s to 1979 and therefore explores the historical settings for debates that still continue. Since British council housing has become the subject of major sales since the 1980s and the Danish government recently proposed similar strategies, the policies of the last two decades warrant a separate study that space would not allow for here. Instead the focus turns on the middle decades of the twentieth century when the housing authorities of Århus and Newcastle faced the challenge of changes in their cities' socio-economic backgrounds that affected how residents and tenants related to their respective public housing providers.

Positioning the thesis

The present study draws on a diversity of studies, which are incorporated at varying levels in each thematic chapter. This enables it to take a broad view of the history of social housing. The previous sections considered some overarching themes that will be discussed throughout the thesis, however additional studies have been considered in its preparation in turn have left impressions on the work. Historians of housing policy, domestic architecture and planning have been concerned to understand how policy shaped housing forms, and in turn, in particular in studies concerned with notions of gender and domestic architecture have been studied for their relationship to social relationships in the home, in the location of gendered roles in the domestic sphere.¹²

This has led some post-modern writers in material cultural studies and sociology to move towards studying consumption practices in the home as a sphere for shaping identity.¹³ Although the former projects may provide fresh cultural insights into the creation of subjectivity through domestic meaning-formation, the present project studies the socio-cultural aspects of housing at the level of city governance. Indeed some writers are concerned that the concentrated focus on matters of identity might obscure the fundamental political problem of social inequality created in capitalist societies, which a study of social housing such as Michael Harloe's has emphasised more strongly.¹⁴ The thesis touches on such cultural meaning-making when contextualising the mediating role

of Århus' and Newcastle's housing providers, although it studies this in its interaction with public housing discourse.

The comparative dimension

In the last 10 years a burgeoning literature has arisen both within social history and in housing studies on the approaches and uses of the comparison.¹⁵ This rich literature provides a valuable resource for the social historian concerned with building up a route into a comparative study. Social historians particularly in Germany have attempted to outline typological categories for comparisons. They have emphasised the value of comparison for explanation or understanding and the suggested uses of cultural history in comparative studies of societies.¹⁶ Furthermore, the mainly Franco-Germanic comparative historiography has given rise to a debate about the inability of comparisons to take account of cultural exchange and transfer, which to critics of the comparative approach have led to national polarisation in comparisons.¹⁷

The ambition of the thesis is to use the comparison in an interpretative way, facilitating *Verstehen* (understanding). This involves a careful consideration of the concepts deployed, and ultimately follows the arguments of a Weberian historical approach employed to discover differences.¹⁸ The *Verstehende* comparison can also show the significance of mutual interaction between the chosen cases. Comparative cases are not isolated units and may have shared historical moments that reveal further particularities in the reception they may have had. 'Cultural transfer' is the concept used to describe such an exchange of ideas and cultural material. Although it is suggested above that many historical studies emphasise particularity and difference between cases, H. Kaelble reminds us that in doing so and thereby excluding possible similarities, historians would be limiting their potential findings.¹⁹ When housing policies are considered in comparative histories within the British housing studies discourse, the notion of policy transfer is recognized, but seemingly only in as far as to address contemporary housing questions. It would appear that the historical transfer processes within the area of social housing have been neglected. Indeed comparisons of housing systems themselves play a role in the reflexive process of transfer and warrant systematic research in the future. This thesis will broach the subject of transfer only in as far as point of contact and travel was discovered in the evidence. The central orientation of the work is still the juxtaposed situation of the cases in the comparison.

Thesis structure

The thesis employs a pragmatic interdisciplinary social historical method within the comparative framework and investigates this by juxtaposing and contrasting the two cities. It explores aspects of social housing in Århus and Newcastle from a variety of perspectives to get closer to the diverse meanings of social housing for different agents. Within each chapter each city therefore will be considered in turn, while comparative implications are drawn in a concluding section of each chapter.

The first chapter looks at the background to the developing social housing systems in the two cities, which is traced to the end of the nineteenth century. Although the central period covered by the thesis was originally intended to cover the period after the Second World War it is important to explore the earlier origins of the social housing systems in order to explain and underpin the subsequent themes covered in later chapters. During the initiation of the two social housing systems particular perceptions of structural organisation and agency were established that affected the way reflections on social housing were shaped after 1945. The principles of co-operative housing within a democratic and egalitarian framework were formulated in the Danish city during the interwar period, while Newcastle Council's Housing Committee was defining an approach to housing management that placed itself as central to the city's social housing provisions, with an emphasis on technical solutions to the city's housing problems.

The post-war history of social housing in the two cities is treated across a series of themes in chapter two. Firstly the organisation and administration of housing is described in order to consider manifestations of continuity and renewal taking place during the 1950s. The underlying ideals and principles of the housing authorities are explored as they indicate qualitative differences in the social housing strategies adopted in the two cities. Secondly the material production of housing and its location in planning is studied, as historians have noted in the area of planning in particular that issues of democracy and citizenship were pertinent to post-war urban planning thought, and housing became an integral element of wider planning ideals.²⁰ This was embodied in the notion of the neighbourhood unit, which contemporary sociologists considered critically, but which in both Århus and Newcastle were accepted as devices for creating local community life.

The third chapter turns its attention to the promotion of urban social housing and the role of the housing authorities in this process. The visual and material culture of social housing, supported by a specific political culture, has not yet been systematically reviewed in the housing literature. The chapter considers the imagery disseminated by local housing providers and professionals to impart particular messages about the significance of social housing for post-war society. The chapter examines exhibitions and the uses of show homes in marketing style campaigns by Århusian housing authorities and Newcastle City Council. Twentieth century image-culture provides a rich source for historians of cities and housing to explore cultural meanings, and the chapter adopts a view of such cultural products as they arose from within the housing strategies of the two cities. The implications of the imagery for the self-perception of the housing providers will in this way become clear.

Moreover, the thesis will at certain points consider the role of mediation processes more widely, concerning itself with the study of how social housing and domestic architecture and design was 'sold' to the populations of Århus and Newcastle through for example the marketing work of housing associations and local authorities. Studies of representation in housing narratives seem to have been neglected by housing studies and the field has so far missed out on opportunities to understand mediations of housing beyond macro-level policies. It may be suggested that this promotional work led to certain meanings of 'place' for the cities' residents.²¹ Writers concerned with 'selling' notions of the urban sphere as part of regenerative strategies have shown that this phenomenon is linked to the wider historical processes of urbanisation.²² As the thesis reflects on the meaning of democratic culture in two urban housing systems the creation of these meanings become important cultural constructs in need of exploration.

Optimistic visual messages disseminating the position of the housing authorities did little to appease radical voices during the 1960s and 1970s. The fourth chapter moves closer to the ground to consider the role of grass roots organisations committed to housing action. Both cities experienced a flourish of subversive activity relating to privately rented housing, while at the same time Danish housing associations were establishing institutionalised democratic organisation processes, the so-called *beboerdemokrati*, as a statutory requirement. Thus the fourth chapter broadens its view to take in local housing action while relating it to the official social housing discourse. The thesis will consider the

means by which housing action groups worked in Århus as a counter-point to the bureaucratised processes of the Danish housing associations. 'Participation' and direct democracy were central concepts in Århus and Newcastle during the 1970s and the relative weight of the concepts will be examined. Social activism similarly took place on Tyneside, and the chapter will compare how the approaches to participation and the perceptions of the resources available to achieve the changes in housing policies were mobilised and organised in both cities.

The fifth chapter adopts a comparison of a large local Århusian housing area (Gellerupparken), and the Newcastle council redevelopment area, the Byker Wall. The two estate histories allow for a synthesis of the preceding strands developed in the thesis overall, while their very unique characters grant them a specific status as symbolic of certain turning points in the histories of housing. The question arises regarding how unique they really were or are? Indeed as living and evolving monuments to particular moments of social housing thought their physical presences stand as places of memory in the history of social housing.

Finally the sixth chapter in part takes a step back from the specific cases of Århus and Newcastle and returns to the questions of the value of comparison in studies of urban social housing. The chapter is divided in two distinct sections and raises more questions than it can answer. But in the process it suggests valuable new in-roads to studies of housing systems that encompass the historical adoption of the comparison of housing systems and the policy transfer process, asking whether useful knowledge could be gleaned from insights into how international learning processes adopted through professional study visits and inter-civic communication took place. What new knowledge was adopted and in what way did external impressions and contacts make their mark felt in the local setting? The transfer of ideas between nations takes place at great speed in (post-)modern society, through visits, publications, the media and more recently the Internet. Individuals, professional institutions and civic organisations are instances of communication at international, national and local level that may leave traces of exchanges of ideas in the socio-cultural space of cities for example.²³ Århus and Newcastle were not immune from such international meetings. The first part of chapter six will therefore consider moments of transfer and exchange that involved local politicians and housing representatives in order to widen the comparative perspective from the

separated Danish and British positions. The second part will consider the themes of the thesis more widely and draw together the many threads that are carried through the previous chapters.

Overall the thesis will draw out the key themes outlined above in the local urban arena to explore issues of the comparative social housing history of Århus and Newcastle. It will become clear that definitions of democracy had very different resonances within the social housing systems of the two cities during the twentieth century. The institutionalisation of democratic procedure varied and thus the meaningful formation of representative and direct democratic potential in each case took on different forms. In summary the findings in the thesis suggest that the role of resident democracy in Århus as it waxed and waned and then became an enhanced feature of the core 'soul' of the housing movement during the 1970s allowed for greater influence and a more open dialogue within the social housing sector than council housing could provide for tenants in Newcastle. During long periods of the twentieth century the Danish and by extension Århusian housing movement identified part of its role as interpreting an element of Danish identity and democratic culture that was encouraged but also contested at the local level. By force of the distance and level of professionalized and technocratic influence in Newcastle's housing management on the other hand, tenants had little option but to accept or react to the housing system provided – there was little room for a more fluid debate and the greyer shades of a flexible democratic culture. This is not to say that the Danish case was ideal – with increased bureaucratisation and scale the rigidity of power could become a hindrance to more open models of democratic participation and the potential role democratic housing systems could play in providing welfare for the majority within the local culture of social housing.

¹ Erhvervsarkivet, Report from Holme-Tranbjerg Council Committee's visit to England, 12.07.1963

² Michael Harloe's comparative approach employs a universalising perspective to the five nations in his study. M. Harloe et al, *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe & America*, London: Blackwell, 1995

³ Stein Ugelvik Larsen and Ingrid Louise Ugelvik suggest that Sweden took the lead in developing a specific Scandinavian route, while Denmark's wealth based on industrial exports in the twentieth century separated it from its Nordic neighbours. Stein Ugelvik Larsen and Ingrid Louise Ugelvik, Scandinavia, in R. Eastwell, *European Political Cultures. Conflict or Convergence?*, London: Routledge, 1997, p. 215. Elements of Danish social democratic welfare state developments, particularly in housing, have been interpreted as undermined by the culture of compromise that otherwise is a characteristic of the Scandinavian model, see G. Esping-Andersen, *Politics against Markets*, Princeton University Press, 1985, – Esping-Andersen has suggested that post-war Danish welfare strategies made it an 'outlier' of the Scandinavian model, implicitly enhancing the role of Sweden as a key exemplar.

⁴ S. Kolstrup identifies Århus Council as a leading force in establishing the early welfare state institutions of which housing seemed intended to become an element – see his *Fra kommunesocialisme til folkepension. Velfærdsstatens rødder*, Cph.: Selskabet til Forskning i Arbejderbevægelsens Historie, 1996;

⁵ Lotte Jensen, *Demokratiforestillinger i den almennyttige boligsektor*, Cph.: Institut for Statskundskab, 1997; Lotte Jensen, Images of Democracy in Danish Social Housing, in M. Thompson, G. Grendstad, and P. Selle, *Cultural Theory as Political Science*, Routledge, 1999; O. Lind and J. Møller, *Boligfolk, folkebolig. Politik og praksis i boligbevægelsens historie*, Cph.: Boligselskabernes Landsforening, 1994.

⁶ John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1985*, London: Routledge, 1991; Colin G. Pooley (ed.), *Housing Strategies in Europe 1880-1930*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992; Haloe et al, *ibid.*, S. Lowe, *passim*; Anne Power, *Hovels to High Rise, State housing in Europe since 1870*, London: Routledge, 1993; Anne Power, *Estates on the Edge*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999

⁷ Anne Power, *Property before People - the management of twentieth century council housing*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1987; Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture. The history of a social experiment*, London: Routledge, 2000; M. Daunton, *House and Home in the Victorian City*, London: Edward Arnold, 1983; M. Swenarton, *Homes fit for Heroes*, London: Heineman, 1981; Peter Malpass, *Housing Associations and Housing Policy. A Historical Perspective*, Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 2000; Malpass, Peter, *Housing & the Welfare State. The development of Housing Policy in Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005; E. Nygaard, *Tag over Hovedet*, Cph.: Arkitektens Forlag, 1984; O. Lind and J. Møller, *ibid.*

⁸ Fællesorganisationen af Almennyttige Danske Boligselskaber, *Fremtidens Boligvæsen*, Cph.: Dansk Andelstrykkeri, 1945, p.65:

Da Boligen.....er en af de allervigtigste livsbestemmende Faktorer i den menneskelige Tilværelse, maa der være Grænser for, hvor store Forskelligheder et sundt Demokrati kan tolerere paa dette Omraade.

⁹ N.M. Day, *The Role of the Architect in Post-War State Housing. A case study of the housing work of the London County Council, 1939-1956*, Unpublished Ph.D., Warwick University, 1983

¹⁰ Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial, Vision and Reality in Planned Housing*, Hilary Shipman Ltd., 1990; E.W. Cooney, High Flats in Local Authority Housing England and Wales since 1945, in Anthony Sutcliffe (ed.), *Multi-Storey Living. The British Working-Class Experience*, London: Croom helm, 1974

¹¹ John Flint, Maintaining an Arm's Length? Housing, Community Governance and the Management of 'Problematic' Populations, *Housing Studies*, 2006, 21 (2), p.171-186; Paul Hickman, Approaches to Tenant Participation in the English Local Authority Sector, *Housing Studies*, 2006, 21 (2), p. 209-225; John Flint, The Responsible Tenant: Housing Governance and the Politics of Behaviour, *Housing Studies*, 2004, 19, (6), p.893-909; Lotte Jensen, Challenges to

Citizenship, *Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research*, 1995, 12, p.177-194; Lotte Jensen (1997), *ibid.*

¹² Alison Ravetz and Richard Turkington, *The Place of Home. English Domestic Environments, 1914-2000*, London: E & FN Spon. For a gendered view of housing issues see e.g. Matrix, *Making Space. Women and the Man Made Environment*, London: Pluto Press, 1984; Nynne Koch (ed.), *Boligrammer menneskeverd - en kvinderapport*, Cph.: Branner og Korch, 1978; M. Roberts, *The Modernisation of Family Life? Sexual Divisions in Architecture and Town Planning, 1940-1957*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1986

¹³ Jos Boys, From Alcatraz to the OK Corral: Images of Class and Gender, in J. Attfield and P. Kirkham, *A View from the Interior. Feminism Women and Design*, London: The Women's Press, 1989, Daniel Miller, Appropriating the State on the Council Estate, in Putnam and Newton (eds.), *Household Choices*, London: Futures, 1990; Ritzuko Ozaki, Society and Housing Form: Home-Centredness in England vs. Family-Centredness in Japan, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 200, (114), 3, p.337-357

¹⁴ For a critical view on the fragmentation of studies of civil society that is suggested to ignore the continuing process of capitalist disruption of equality forming measures see E.M. Wood, *Democracy against Capitalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, ch. 8, Civil Society and the politics of identity

¹⁵ Recently an academic journal in the field of housing studies was dedicated to considerations on the usefulness of comparison to the field, see *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 2001, 16; S. Lowe, *Housing Policy Analysis, British Housing in Cultural and Comparative Context*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004

¹⁶ See the anthology H.-G. Haupt and J. Kocka, (eds.), *Geschichte und Vergleich. Aufsätze und Ergebnisse International vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1996; H. Kaelble, and J. Schriewer, (eds.), *Diskurse und Entwicklungspfade: der Gesellschaftsvergleich in den Geschichts- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1999; H. Kaelble and J. Schriewer, (eds.), *Gesellschaften im Vergleich: Forschungen aus Sozial- und Geschichtswissenschaften*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999; J. Matthes, The Operation called 'Vergleichen', in J. Matthes (ed.), *Zwischen den Kulturen? Die sozialwissenschaften vor dem Problem des Kulturvergleichs*, Göttingen: 1992; Thomas Welskopp, Stolpersteine auf dem Königsweg. Methodenkritische Anmerkungen zum internationalen Vergleich in der Gesellschaftsgeschichte, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 1995, 35

¹⁷ M. Espagne, Sur les limites du comparatisme en histoire culturelle, *Genèse* 17, Sept. 17, 1994; M. Espagne, and M. Werner, La construction d'une référence culturelle allemande en France genèse et histoire (1750-1914), *Annales ESR*, July-August 1987, 4; Lothar Jordan and Bernd Kortländer (eds.), *Nationaler Grenzen und internationaler Austausch. Studien zum Kultur- und Wissenschaftstransfer in Europa*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995. Valuable studies have also arisen within an Anglo-American social history context. An approach to cultural transfer is Daniel T. Rodgers' history of the American absorption of European social policy - see his *Atlantic Crossings. Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, Cambridge Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998. Nancy Green has considered the role of emigrants for the historical comparison, in a sense a dimension of cultural transfer: The Comparative Method and Poststructuralist Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies, in Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (eds.), *Migration, Migration History, History*, Berlin: Peter Lang, 1997

¹⁸ What Kocka (1996) calls 'the principle of individuality,' p.206

¹⁹ H. Kaelble, *op. cit.*, p.22-24

²⁰ H. Meller, Urban renewal and citizenship: the quality of life in British cities, 1890-1990, *Urban History*, 1995, (22), 1, p.63-84; John Davis, 'Simple Solutions to Complex Problems': The Greater London Council and the Greater London Development Plan, 1965-1973, in Jose Harris, *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003

²¹ D. Hayden's work on place creation provides a rich source of ideas for local history studies by considering issues around negotiated meanings of 'place,' see Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place. Urban Landscape as Public History*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995

²² S.V. Ward, and J.R. Gold (eds.), *Place Promotion. The Use of Publicity and Marketing to sell Towns and Regions*, London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 1994; S. Ward, *Selling Places. The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities*, London: E & FN Spon, 1998

²³ P.-Y. Saunier Sketches from the Urban Internationale, 1910-50. Guardian Angels of the City: Voluntary Associations, International Institutions and US Philanthropy, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2001, (25), 2, p.380-403, Espagne *ibid.*, Kaelble *ibid.*

Chapter 1

Method and Approach

Introduction

If the thesis outlines the findings of historical research, the methodological implications of how this research was undertaken can be drawn up in order to outline the series of research questions that have underpinned the present work. In dealing with the methodological problems of the thesis this chapter will consider two central dimensions to the work: firstly the process of historical research and secondly the questions that arise when employing this research method – what decisions need to be made to make sense of the historical material in light of the central comparative thread. The line of questioning will therefore be defined, the selection of cases is considered and issues in the access to and approach adopted in selecting appropriate historical materials will be discussed.

The topic of the thesis – the comparison of social housing in Århus and Newcastle after 1945 – was in its early form raised as a research problem by the Centre for Northern Studies at the University of Northumbria. It arose out of an earlier research project undertaken in the Centre that had considered the economic and industrial decline of Newcastle and Malmö in Sweden.¹ This project had taken Labour Party politics and its relation to social housing as a central question for a thesis chapter. Little work had in any case been done on the post-war history of Newcastle's housing system and it appeared to be a useful area for further exploration. The current writer's linguistic and cultural background is Danish, and although it would have been possible to explore the housing provision in three different cities across Denmark Britain and Sweden,² it was decided for reasons of resource and the limitations a three year research framework, to explore two cities, with a shift away from the Swedish case to a Danish city. In choosing Århus as an appropriate case for comparison with Newcastle, several factors featured to make this a suitable site for research.

Choosing the cases: Århus and Newcastle

So why were Århus and Newcastle in particular chosen to study aspects of social housing phenomena? Is it sufficient to select two cases on the basis of an analogy of divergent solutions to social housing problems alone, or on the question whether they each represent a case within a nation that has been defined almost as ideal types of particular welfare states?³ Indeed by using a city in a Scandinavian country as one case for comparison, certain implicit assumptions may be

traced within the comparison prior to the analysis having been undertaken. And what of the type of cities Århus and Newcastle were: their demographic structures, their industrial constitution – might that not render them ‘too different’ to evoke adequately in a comparison?⁴ Their different historical trajectories were considered instead as areas of interest to the study. Once it is claimed that such cases present insurmountable differences for useful comparison, such differences can be traced from implicit comparative assumptions. It would also be difficult to consider comparisons of ‘civilisations’ as distinct as Asia and Western Europe if such delimiting criteria were applied.⁵ Instead difference can be employed as a device for highlighting further moments of understanding through the comparison.

It is instead the differences between the two cities, in terms of size, demographic constitution or in cultural-political organisation that provide the starting point for thinking about equivalences that create the frame for the comparison to be built around. Despite differences between Århus and Newcastle equivalences existed that suggest useful comparability.⁶ Both cities are considered cultural and administrative capitals of their respective regions. They both had busy trade ports and historically they were linked commercially through the coal trade. Both cities had significant universities, but they also had working class populations, whose craft and skills backgrounds may have differed, but who in residential terms shared similar needs for suitable housing. Hence demands were placed on civic and community leaders in both cities to find solutions to improve the housing conditions as the twentieth century advanced. It was within this framework of seeming differences and equivalences that the thesis was built up. The differences were nevertheless great, and they will become apparent as the thesis progresses. Here it is necessary to emphasise that in considering the differences it was decided that they did not prohibit a comparison.

However to define the comparative units the cities were also defined spatially and temporally to enable some delimitation and selection of the research themes. In the present thesis there is no deferment of activities and event over time between the two cases that affected the comparative trajectory.⁷ The temporality of events and activities during the twentieth century lies very close between the two cases until the movement in Britain to radically change housing policy in 1979, and hence this date provides a clear demarcation point for closing off the study. On the other hand, the spatial focus of the urban units will now be described in more detail in order to show where research efforts were concentrated.

A consideration of urban boundaries

In order to clarify the extent of the research into the activities of the two housing authorities it is worth briefly clarifying the urban borders employed in the cases of Århus and Newcastle that constitute the limits of the study. During most of the twentieth century Newcastle was, and still is, part of a large conurbation, Tyneside, while Århus is a separate city on the east coast of Jutland. Newcastle industrialised and was an urban centre much earlier than Århus, but then this is a less significant factor in the later twentieth century, as Århus, along with other large Danish cities, rapidly urbanised and saw a significant growth in industrialisation during the early and mid-twentieth century.

For the sake of the present comparison the two cities have been aligned by interpreting Newcastle's social housing system as separate from the Tyneside conurbation as a whole. Albeit that housing overflowed into land owned by Northumberland County Council and new town developments were planned at Killingworth and Cramlington in collaboration with its neighbours, Newcastle City Council's social housing provision has been selected as the comparative focus in the English case. In Århus on the other hand, it would be inconceivable to exclude the close relationship between the city proper and its surrounding suburban local authorities. For a great part of the period in question the tensions between the Greater Århus councils affected the spatial distribution of social housing in the area and Århus municipal Statistics Office commonly treated Greater Århus as a comparative entity when examining demographics and its economic development potential. Furthermore, during the 1970 local authority rationalisation exercise Greater Århus became a single local authority, when small municipalities were merged with the city and came under the regulation of Århus Council.

The comparison therefore treats the urban entities of Århus and Newcastle pragmatically and considers the problems arising within both settings - as space became a restraining factor on housing provision. The definition of their territorial spaces was a necessary preliminary before entering into the deeper historical research of primary sources, but once established the spatial demarcation helped in turn to clarify the breadth of further research activity.

Conceptual design

When considering the choice of cases and the value of the case study method Bent Flyvbjerg identifies a useful distinction that is valid here.⁸ The case study is a valuable way for a researcher to learn their craft. It allows for a contained area of study that within a given set of resources and

a defined timeframes can be employed to sharpen appropriate research skills, accessing archives, undertaking interviews and constructing a meaningful narrative. The cases selected for this thesis are the housing systems that existed within two cities within separate nation states, which place certain demands and dependencies on the skills of the historian; and when selecting cases for comparison certain contingencies, both internal and external, impinge on their selection. Furthermore, the comparative intention contains its own requirements: In order to facilitate a context-rich comparison, or rather, juxtaposition, of two separate urban housing systems some measure of selectivity will be undertaken, of balancing detail with relevant context.

Thus selecting cases for comparative research requires both rigorous comparative questioning, but it also hinges on almost accidental conditions of circumstance. The accidental elements of language and the practicalities of available source material can affect the results of the comparison. The shape of a study of two-countries whose languages are as different as English and Danish depends to a great extent on the language skills of the historian when access to primary sources is required.⁹ Although some cross-national studies are undertaken collaboratively through contact between academics with the requisite language and cultural insights, the author of the thesis here had the opportunity to stay for extended periods in both countries and employed her language skills when undertaking the research. The cultural inflections embedded in the thesis built on a dual-cultural upbringing in both Denmark and Britain. This cultural insight may also evoke implicit judgements of the cases being studied, and the task is set to create distance through comparative analysis.¹⁰

A choice of perspective: path dependency and the political culture of social housing

Choosing an appropriate view point from which to study a topic is integral to the research project. It helps define the research questions and guides the process of reading and reviewing findings as the work proceeds. A large part of the initial research was based on secondary readings of national housing policy history and sociological research in both countries. Substantial authoritative works have been written within comparative housing policy: background comparative histories in the English language of both British and Danish housing policy is found in Michael Harloe's and Anne Power's work, while specific national housing policy histories are found for each country within social historical, political historical and architectural historical works.¹¹ As archival research proceeded and the amount of detail unearthed seem to require extrapolation, the emphasis on the urban level was prioritised, while the national policy history was retained as traces embedded within the housing decisions made locally. As the key focus of

this study was the comparison between two cities, the national perspective informed and supported, but may seemingly have been disguised by the priorities of local archival findings.

The questions in the thesis pointed to differences in the origin of and subsequent housing management pathways of the two social housing systems in the twentieth century. The notion of divergent path dependencies in comparative housing studies is identified by Stuart Lowe: '....it shows how differences between societies become ingrained in the political culture.'¹² The key issues around which the thesis turns therefore became the presence of housing associations as a forceful presence in the culture of housing in Århus, with little influence in Newcastle for most of the twentieth century. However the individual pathways were nevertheless subject to the analogous problems of housing shortage, housing need and the requirements of technical and social solutions to the housing problem in both cities. The inroad to compare the social and politico-cultural conditions that provided the basis for the divergent routes that were adopted in the two cities was sparked by a dialogue in the first instance between the resources examined in Britain with subsequent findings in Denmark.

Questions of the origins and level of state and local authority involvement in housing management and administration first arose from the seemingly unique position of the British local authority in social housing provision.¹³ Subsequent research in Denmark showed that the weight given to social housing associations has given the Danish social housing system a different inflection, where the local state provided a supportive role to autonomous social housing associations. The Danish social housing association movement shaped and was shaped by a discourse concerned with democracy and participation as well as the provision of dwellings that had a different resonance in Britain. When studied at the level of the city such a discourse can be examined in detail, allowing the voices of institutions and their people to resonate in dialogue with local and national housing concerns. Thus the question of the politics of social housing in Århus and Newcastle is in the thesis examined through a frame that allows cultural elements to be shown to be contingent on the shape and absorption of the social housing 'message' in the two cities.

Historiographical issues

In order to answer the questions raised, the thesis has built on existing secondary sources, but much primary research into municipal and housing authority records was necessary in Newcastle and Århus. There are large gaps in the post-war histories of social housing in the two cities

individually.¹⁴ The research undertaken for the thesis therefore both contributes to the respective histories of the two cities and sheds light on particular themes in their housing histories that are shared as well as where those themes reveal differences.

A comparison across national and urban boundaries also presented problems in balancing the compatibility of sources. Urban histories of the two cities vary in their quality and the depth of description they provide of the housing in each case. In both Århus and Newcastle specific studies on the history of housing cover the period before the Second World War, revealing a need to expand on the histories for the subsequent period.¹⁵ Århus benefits from a municipally instituted local history committee, which regularly publishes local history material.¹⁶ A major publication has recently attempted to achieve a holistic approach to Århus urban history, including a themed section on urban space.¹⁷

The historiographical tradition arising from different, particularly when cross-country, cases frequently differ and colour the historical research process.¹⁸ In the present study the difference in the study of housing in Denmark and Britain became apparent when both secondary and primary sources were approached. The bulk of national housing history was initially found in Britain, since social housing history in Denmark remains under-examined. In addition Denmark has featured only marginally in international comparative housing studies. In Britain the scholarly study of housing policy provides a deep, but varied background to the history of social housing. The field of housing studies, albeit a relatively young field, provides a rich source of studies on local and national housing issues: housing policy, housing management, housing culture and citizenship. In Denmark only little housing research has been undertaken in universities. Here architectural history has instead taken housing as an area of study, while the Danish National Housing Research Institute has built up a body of work of housing research, spanning sociological and cultural issues, as well as technical aspects. In both the Danish and the British cases there is a rich resource in the national and local architectural press, while the Danish National Federation of Housing Associations published a periodical, *Boligen*, which has been a vital source for the understanding the socio-cultural constitution of the Danish social housing movement.¹⁹

Much of the general literature on the history of housing in Britain has focused on policy matters from the level of the state, often neglecting the issue of local cultural perspectives. The question of the importance of cultural elements affecting the politics and in turn being affected by notions

of democratic sensibilities arose from considering two problems: Firstly the results of research into the democratic mindset of Danish players in the housing association movement and secondly by considerations of cultural activities that appeared to be present in Århus, that seemed to be integral to the self-perception and self-projection of housing associations locally.²⁰ Policy matters could not be ignored in the research, indeed policy was the focal point of many local authority debates and correspondence items kept in the archive, but the dialogue the historian managed between questions and gaps in the secondary and tertiary literature and the evidence appearing in the archives, suggested at times that the cultural dimension should not be ignored.²¹ It was the issue of the structuring relationship between actors engaged in local decision making, that found it way into official documents, which formed the basis for the present research investigation.

While some studies define culture broadly to mean a 'whole way of life' in the sense of customs, socio-linguistic patterns, cultural representation and the diversity of meanings arising from this, the study here has chosen to move the cultural perspective away from the lived experience in housing estates or the home, or housing behaviours that might have been a criteria around which research could have built.²² Indeed this is in part the research strategy undertaken by anthropologists and sociologists when questions of cultural behaviours arise.²³ Instead the meaning of 'culture' as it is used in the sense of the 'political culture' of social housing in the present study is delineated around cultural ceremonies and rituals, and the structures that enabled them. Cultural customs evoking long-standing traditions as well as the creation of specific imagery and spectacles to evoke particular meanings of housing the two cities are considered.

This explains why the local housing authority was chosen as the core around which research was undertaken. Rather than adopt the detail of every day life as its perspective, partly for reasons of resource, the thesis has looked at the level of the housing providers and their interaction with the local urban neighbourhoods. It is nevertheless becoming apparent that scholars from within British housing studies are aware of the gap in knowledge of tenants' histories, which could be gained through oral testimonies.²⁴ Current housing research, including historical investigations, are absorbing the methods of oral history, ethnomethodology and the repercussions of the debates around the cultural turn in social theory.²⁵ The cultural system of meaning-making examined in such studies encompass a variety of individualised perceptions.²⁶ They contribute to tales of a constituted subjectivity that is structured and helps to structure housing as a way to living life in the home. Much rich knowledge and insight is being gained from such studies, but since the questions of housing provision in two cities were intended to be studied historically, covering

most of the twentieth century, the archival research route was selected as the main trajectory of the investigation. Interviews were undertaken to clarify particular situations, but the comparative dimension and the practical management of the research across two countries by a single researcher inhibited a systematic ethnomethodological approach, which lends itself to synchronic and micro-level cultural studies. The definition of political culture in this thesis is premised on the construction of housing from the point of the view of the interface between providers and residents, and therefore the official and less formal documents found in the archives as historical evidence retained the stronger voice and was subsequently prioritised.

Issues in archival research

It is the historian's task to dissect the vast amount of information made available in the process of research, writing findings into a final narrative that can be evaluated by a wider, scholarly readership.²⁷ If the decision is made to encompass more than a single case in the historical study to enable an explicit comparison, then extensive reading is still required, but the external limitations of resource and time may add a complication to the research process. Archival research, as most historical skills, such as raising appropriate questions, analysing text, image and discourse is a general requirement for the historical method, rather than specific for comparison.²⁸ The historian's skills are honed in the archive, by deep, embedded reading, selection of examples and 'facts,' and crucially throughout, critically engaging in an iterative, evaluative approach with historical materials.²⁹ Although the historian may start with the intention of creating a historical analysis based on problem solving, the dialogue with archival sources throws up additional perspectives, sometimes accidentally discovered, that seem to call for further elucidation.

Once Århus and Newcastle had been chosen for study and the local archival sources could be considered, the additional complication of the divergent traditions of collecting and archiving public documents needed to be addressed. The fundamental difference in the provision of social housing in Århus and Newcastle is the organisational means by which it was planned, designed, built and administered. Such administrative traditions have been contingent upon the preservation of historical records. While the present comparison has required extensive archival research to explore post-war themes in social housing, the research process required insight into the means of archival collection, or the origins of sources. In Both cities much of the local evidence has been found in local government documents and the local press.³⁰ But in Århusian the additional layer of housing association administration has provided valuable additional material.³¹ This additional

layer of information is clearly a result of the differences in the two cities' housing provision, and in itself reveals the devolved nature of the organisation of social housing in Denmark.

The way public authorities filed and archived their documentation presented an initial problem: how would equivalent themes in the study be selected when two different archiving conventions prevailed? The archives of the City Council of Newcastle were organised by committee while the Århusian local authority collected their files by cases. Tomes covering committee decisions were available in Newcastle, indexed for the most part, that allowed for the tracking of the history of specific housing developments for example. Although Newcastle's municipal library service started collecting newspaper cuttings on housing matters during the 1970s, what seems to be mostly lost in Newcastle's local housing authority archives are correspondence records, notes on discussions, any petitions and reports on visits abroad. This on the other hand is frequently present in the Århusian archives. Since local authority records were in the main created as case files, many in-depth records were kept. The case files in Århus might include records such as letters, official publications, images and newspaper cuttings relating to particular housing activities. For the historian keen to explore the details of local housing activities this presented a rich resource, further enlivened by the documentation kept by individual housing associations, minutes of committee and annual general meetings, as well as important collections of scrap books maintained by particularly rigorous associations.³²

The identification of compatible issues required careful selection, while the problem of gauging the level of detail at which the issues should be considered in light of the comparative approach continuously compelled selection and de-selection. Selectivity of problems and detail in comparison is central to the comparative analytic perspective.³³ In the present thesis it was decided that where detail was required to illustrate particularly significant events, or where examples of various approaches to housing management could be emphasised, this would be important to the contribution of the thesis.

Although criticism of the abundance of detail in historical narrative has highlighted the danger of the loss of analytic clarity, or the disappearance of theoretical clarification in historical explication, the examples introduced in the comparative narrative over the following chapters are employed both to reveal traits important in identifying how the social housing systems in the two cities differed to the extent they did, as well as to fill in the gaps left open from unexplored post-war housing history in both cities. The comparative analysis of cities that seeks to understand, or

show a deep *Verstehen*, of its cases, warrants at times a level of detail that would not be possible to explore in national studies.³⁴ But neither does it absorb all things as they really were in either city, as the comparison breaks down the narrative to reflect and measure the comparative elements against each other. The process is a reflective dialectic research procedure that at times becomes fractured, but through further consideration is made 'whole' in the historical narrative.³⁵ Through the process of evaluating research findings by comparative juxtaposition the histories are made 'strange' and the historian becomes enveloped in reflexive practice.³⁶

By examining social housing at the city level the variety of primary and secondary material has been broad, yet rich in providing 'thickness' to the description, and so of value to the comparison and for furthering the study of housing in each city individually.³⁷ The comparison of social housing in the urban history of the two cities therefore contributes to the wider comparative work being undertaken in comparative social histories of housing.

The scope of the project

The time provided for undertaking research for a thesis delimits the extent of the scale of the research. Managing the background reading of the housing histories of two countries and general national history to understand context - undertaking periods of study abroad and synthesising this in a comparison is a complex task. The work plan outlining the work strategy for research was staged: Within the first year of the work background reading of the British case was started. During this first year two short periods spent in Copenhagen allowed for an overview of the Danish housing literature, and a brief survey of the archival sources in Århus. Thus the dialogue between secondary and primary sources was started in Britain, where one set of questions arose. However the difficulties of identifying compatible and sometimes new issues from the Danish case created an additional research problem. Managing the diversity of archival sources, juggling the key research questions and considering any new questions that presented themselves could finally only be addressed during a six month stay in Århus during the second year. Once the sets of research from both Århus and Newcastle had been gathered, a period of analysis was undertaken, whilst writing up the research findings had been underway since the early beginnings of research.

The analysis of findings: the comparative approach

But why choose a comparative approach? A comparison fundamentally studies the similarities and differences between two cases or more.³⁸ But the level of perspective, the line of questioning,

the choice of comparative type will eventually impinge on the research findings and may pull the balance towards either end of the difference-similarity scale. The comparison is in this way a means of constructing an analysis around two or more cases for the sake of interpretation, be it descriptive, explanatory or a combination of both. A burgeoning literature on comparative history and its relationship to historical sociology has arisen in the last twenty years.³⁹ Many writers have created categories of comparative types might suggest a starting point for a methodology.⁴⁰ Central research questions raised in such research arise partly from whether a comparison involves two or several cases, or whether an analysis is intended for example to emphasise causality, wider understanding, or furthermore, whether it seeks to emphasise contrasts or applies theoretical models to the comparative analysis. The legacy of comparison in historical sociology is weighted towards a scientific hypothetico-deductive method, which it seems less appropriate to employ in the detailed historical work in the present thesis. This is why the author also agrees with Thomas Welskopp that a comparison is an approach, or a point of view that explicitly compares its multiple cases, but employs research methods general for historical explorations.⁴¹

Historical comparisons employ the general historical methods and processes of source analysis and evaluation that were described above, with the added skill of heightened sensitivity to case selection and focus on selected questions and relationship. Comparative history is similarly selective of its material, determined by its level of scrutiny. In comparative historiography the problem of how to generalise from the particular has been a subject of wide debate.⁴² Much of the impetus for the debate has originated in the discussions between the historian and sociologist, in how far general models can be applied to specific historical cases, and conversely, the question of how detailed historical evidence, or the details of local events is to be considered from a generalised perspective. Bent Flyvbjerg's work to define a case oriented method that is context-rich and strongly context-dependent suggests that a deeply detailed, descriptive exploration of a case in itself is a valid result for forming understanding (or *Verstehen*) – a result of hermeneutic readings of detail - rather than to seek explanation as the primary objective of research.⁴³ However the balance of detail in context must be weighed against the broad analogies of structured themes, otherwise the possibilities of comparison may be reduced.

The present work has attempted to negotiate the need for context with a selection of key themes that can be juxtaposed in the narrative: if some understanding of why each social housing choice in Århus and Newcastle differed is suggested in the first chapter – a perspective that comes close to a causal approach - it was decided for subsequent chapters to see this starting point as the

springboard for describing in more detail the path-dependencies that the two different trajectories led to. If the original comparative questions emphasised difference, the level at which the comparison was studied, the urban local authority level combined with housing association dimension, finally created a contrasting comparison that seeks to understand and elucidate.

The comparative historian Hartmut Kaelble has outlined four advantages of the *Verstehende* comparison, where the aim of the comparison is the deeper understanding of the cases under scrutiny.⁴⁴ The initial benefit for the historian is the careful consideration of the issues to be compared. Secondly, a greater understanding is achieved by the observations of differences and the strangeness of the cases – it was suggested above that the comparison can help emphasise the constructed nature of the historical work, as well as making the historian's 'own' situation, strange. Kaelble thirdly identifies that understanding the conceptual apparatuses (through language and images) of comparative cases can be juxtaposed for the sake of a deeper appreciation of the diversity of conceptual frameworks. The final benefit he notes is the necessary understanding of the relationships and links that may have been developed between the cases being compared. It is suggested here, that the shape of the thesis has been moulded along these four lines: reflection, construction, conceptual analysis and has continuously evoked the notion of cultural transfer in consideration of the social housing systems in the two cities.

Interestingly, the limitations of comparison by contrast may in part be linked to the formal construction of the comparative historical narrative. The act of writing up the findings of two case studies into a coherent comparative text presents its own set of problems. In considering the presentation of the two studies in this thesis this led to a formal structural division within each chapter – more a juxtaposition than an integrated comparison. After early attempts at presenting research findings as integrated elements of a comparative narrative, the problems of detail in context and the diversity of elements between the two cases made it difficult to suggest direct analogies. The problem of what constitutes culture within the social housing setting of Århus and Newcastle, for example, included a wider set of practices in Århus that did not seem to have equivalences in Newcastle. Now this may have been partly due to the lack of sources found in Newcastle. On the other hand if the historical narrative should in any way become meaningful, when including a rich level of contextual detail, it ultimately became clear that the individual cases must in each chapter be written up in separate sections with a short guide to key comparative elements after each set of juxtapositions. Hence the structure of the writing to some extent became determined by the content of the research.

The academic research community that absorb the central tenets of the comparative approach is differentiated, but seem to share the view that the comparative approach will provide the key to a central answer that is only revealed in the comparison.⁴⁵ A critique of the comparison as the red carpet leading to central answers has nonetheless come under criticism recently. Whether a comparison can provide much new knowledge that is in some way pioneering beyond all measure is questionable: '....what comparisons illuminate are not hitherto unknown developments but the significance of institutions and phenomena that national historians take for granted.'⁴⁶ Although comparisons can be used as heuristic devices for exploring new questions (or rather: questions re-framed in a different context),⁴⁷ and are therefore potential aids to further a deeper understanding, the claim to some sort of uniqueness claimed by champions of the comparison needs to be understood in more detail. Instead a comparison such as the one in this thesis, can more modestly suggest frameworks for understanding through the mirroring of questions and through the formal writing up of findings as a juxtaposition of the issues presented.

Conclusion

In the final count then, the study of the social housing systems in Århus and Newcastle as it unfolds in the following chapters has arisen through negotiations and compromises with a diversity of sources framed through questions of discipline-specific research methods and questions of the most appropriate presentation of findings. For those readers looking for singular, or even a selection of routes to an explanation of the differences between the two cases some guiding threads may have been cast, but they remain implicit rather than explicit. The foremost intention of the work has been to use historical exploration, to bring to light and to understand the trajectories of social housing developments in Århus and Newcastle during most of the twentieth century.

¹ Natasha Vall, *Explorations in Comparative History*, unpublished PhD, Newcastle: University of Northumbria, 2000

² The Danish and Swedish languages have shared roots so that for practical reasons the author could have researched there too, however a work involving three case studies would have presented an unrealistic workload within the timeframe provided for the research.

³ Esping-Andersen employs generalised notions that lie close to ideal-types in his classification of welfare states: the British welfare state is described as liberal, the Danish as social democratic. See G. Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990, p.27-45

⁴ When the author first mentioned the choice of cities and nations to fellow historians as comparative cases this question of doubt arose – where the cases not too different? However by raising the issue of difference, by listing the elements that seemingly create such divergence as to prohibit useful comparison, comparison has in a sense already taken place, albeit superficially.

⁵ Jürgen Osthammel discusses the problem of defining inter- and trans-cultural comparison, and the means through which cases across civilisations can be selected for comparative analysis. Jürgen Osthammel, *Trankulturell vergleichende Geschichtswissenschaft*, in H.-G. Haupt and J. Kocka (eds.), *Geschichte und Vergleich. Aufsätze und Ergebnisse International vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1996, p.271-277; J. Osthammel, *Sozialgeschichte im Zivilisationsvergleich*, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 22, 1996, p. 143-164

⁶ Ian Nairn listed the following areas as useful analogies in his 'Nairn's Europe', BBC TV, 07.05.1971; furthermore the two cities at one stage considered mutual compatibilities through a similar list: Bernhard Jensen, the Mayor of Århus, based his invitation to mutual collaboration with Newcastle Council such shared activities. NCCM 17.03.59

⁷ Kocka and Haupt, op. cit., p.31

⁸ Bent Flyvbjerg, *Rationalitet og magt*, Vol.1, Odense: Akademisk Forlag, 1991, p. 142-144

⁹ H. Kaelble, *Der Historische Vergleich. Eine Einführung zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1999

¹⁰ J. Kocka, 'The Uses of Comparative History' in Björk, R., and Molin, K., *Societies made up of History. Essays in Historiography, intellectual history, professionalisation, historical social theory and proto-industrialisation*, Edsbruk: Akademi-tryck AB, 1996, p.208

¹¹ Comparative studies include: Colin G. Pooley (ed.), *Housing Strategies in Europe 1880-1930*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992; Haloe et al, *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe & America*, London: Blackwell, 1995, S. Lowe, *Housing Policy Analysis, British Housing in Cultural and Comparative Context*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004; Anne Power, *Hovels to High Rise, State housing in Europe since 1870*, London: Routledge, 1993; Anne Power, *Estates on the Edge*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999; while single nation studies of social housing are presented in John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1985*, London: Routledge, 1991; Anne Power, *Property before People - the management of twentieth century council housing*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1987; Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture. The history of a social experiment*, London: Routledge, 2000; M. Daunt, *House and Home in the Victorian City*, London: Edward Arnold, 1983; M. Swenarton, *Homes fit for Heroes*, London: Heineman, 1981; Peter Malpass, *Housing Associations and Housing Policy. A Historical Perspective*, Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 2000; Peter Malpass, *Housing & the Welfare State. The development of Housing Policy in Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005; E. Nygaard, *Tag over Hovedet*, Cph.: Arkitektens Forlag, 1984; O. Lind and J. Møller, *Boligfolk, folkebolig. Politik og praksis i boligbevægelsens historie*, Cph.: Boligselskabernes Landsforening, 1994

¹² Stuart Lowe, *Housing Policy Analysis, British Housing in Cultural and Comparative Context*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p.159

¹³ Stuart Lowe op. cit., S. Merrett, *State Housing in Britain*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture. The history of a social experiment*, London: Routledge, 2001

¹⁴ For urban histories of Århus and Newcastle see Ib Gejl (ed.), *Århus, byens historie*, Vol. 1-4, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1995, A. Flowers and V. Histan (eds.) *Water under the Bridges, Newcastle's Twentieth Century*, Newcastle: Tyne Bridge Publications, 1999, William Lancaster and Robert Colls, *Newcastle upon Tyne. A Modern History*, Chichester, Phillimore & Co Ltd., 2001. Local pre-war housing

histories include: Bill Lancaster (ed.), *Working Class Housing on Tyneside 1850-1939*, Berwick: Berwick Press, 1994; Vagn Dybdahl (ed.), *Hus og hjem i Århus*, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1977

¹⁵ For urban histories of Århus and Newcastle see Ib Gejl (ed.), *Århus, byens historie*, Vol. 1-4, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1995, A. Flowers and V. Histan (eds.) *Water under the Bridges, Newcastle's Twentieth Century*, Newcastle: Tyne Bridge Publications, 1999, William Lancaster and Robert Colls, *Newcastle upon Tyne. A Modern History*, Chichester, Phillimore & Co Ltd., 2001. Local pre-war housing histories include: Bill Lancaster (ed.), *Working Class Housing on Tyneside 1850-1939*, Berwick: Berwick Press, 1994, Vagn Dybdahl (ed.), *Hus og hjem i Århus*, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1977

¹⁶ See the annual publications of *Århus Årbog* by Byhistorisk Udvalg, Århus.

¹⁷ *Århus Årbog*. A one-volume work on Århus' history from the Viking age to the present is found in Paludan et al., *Århus Bys Historie fra vikingetid til nutid*, Århus: Husets Forlag, 1998, which states that a comprehensive history of the post-war housing in the city is still sorely lacking. p.377

¹⁸ Stefan Berger, Comparative History, in S. Berger et al, *Writing History. Theory and Practice*, London: Arnold, 2003, p.166

¹⁹ See e.g. *Arkitekten*, *Boligen*, *Blød by*, *The Architectural Review*; *RIBA Journal*; *Northern Architect*

²⁰ Lotte Jensen, *Demokratiforestillinger i den almenyttige boligsektor*, Cph.: Institut for Statskundskab, 1997

²¹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History. Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history*, London: Longman, 2000, p.55-58

²² Raymond Williams, *Keywords. A Vocabulary of culture and society*, London: Fontana Press, 1988, p.87-93

²³ D. Birdwell-Pheasant, *House Life. Space, Place and Family in Europe*, Oxford: Berg, 1999

²⁴ Ian Cole, op. cit., p.288

²⁵ See for example the collection of essays in V. Bonnell and L. Hunt, *Beyond the Cultural Turn. New directions in the study of society and culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999

²⁶ Daniel Miller, Appropriating the State on the Council Estate, in T. Putnam and Newton (eds.), *Household Choices*, London: Futures, 1990; Ritzuko Ozaki, Society and Housing Form: Home-Centredness in England vs. Family-Centredness in Japan, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Sept. 2001, 14, (3)

²⁷ Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice*, London: Arnold, 2000, p.104-107

²⁸ Thomas Welskopp points out that despite the claim of certain processes to be specific for comparison such as selection, context-embedding of explanation and cross-referenced comparative historiographical discussion such processes are really generally applicable to historical method. See his *Stolpersteine auf dem Königsweg. Methodenkritische Anmerkungen zum internationalen Vergleich in der Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 1995, (35), p.345

²⁹ L. Jordanova op. cit, p.28-34, p. 184-192, and John Tosh, op. cit. Chapter Four *passim*

³⁰ Such sources are kept in the Local History Collections of the Libraries of Newcastle City Council, whilst municipal records, minute books for example are kept at the Tyne and Wear archives.

³¹ So, visits to local history collections in municipal libraries in Aarhus necessary, enhanced by visits to 'commercial' libraries and private housing association offices to explore their individual historical sources, such as minute books and promotional literature.

³² The archives of Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening (archive at Erhvervsarkivet) and Brabrand Boligforening (archive kept at the Head Office of the association) contain particularly good scrapbook collections that span local and national housing policy as well as the activities of the housing associations themselves.

³³ Kocka (1996), op. cit., p.207

³⁴ For a theoretical justification for context-rich and dependent case study research based on his 'phronetic' research (defined as a study values and interests, examined through practices) see Bent Flyvbjerg, op. cit.,

³⁵ A great deal of thought has been given to the meta-language of the historical narrative. Key to this discourse on historical self-reflection is Hayden White's work. Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, p.206-208

³⁶ J. Kocka, The Uses of Comparative History, in R. Björk and Karl Molin, *Societies made up of History. Essays in historiography, intellectual history, professionalisation, historical social theory and proto-industrialisation*, Edsbruk: Akademi-tryck AB, 1996, p.201

³⁷ K. Jacobs, Historical Perspectives and Methodologies: Their Relevance for Housing Studies?, *Housing, Theory and Society*, 2001, 18, p.127-135

³⁸ H.-G. Haupt and J. Kocka (eds.), *Geschichte und Vergleich. Aufsätze und Ergebnisse International vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1996, p.9

³⁹ See the anthology H.-G. Haupt and J. Kocka, (eds.), *Geschichte und Vergleich. Aufsätze und Ergebnisse International vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1996; H. Kaelble, and J. Schriewer, (eds.), *Diskurse und Entwicklungspfade: der Gesellschaftsvergleich in den Geschichts- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1999; H. Kaelble and J. Schriewer, (eds.), *Gesellschaften im Vergleich: Forschungen aus Sozial- und Geschichtswissenschaften*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999; J. Matthes, The Operation called 'Vergleichen', in J. Matthes (ed.), *Zwischen den Kulturen? Die sozialwissenschaften vor dem Problem des Kulturvergleichs*, Göttingen: 1992; Thomas Welskopp, Stolpersteine auf dem Königsweg. Methodenkritische Anmerkungen zum internationalen Vergleich in der Gesellschaftsgeschichte, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 1995, 35; Nancy Green, The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies, in Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (eds.), *Migration, Migration History, History*, Berlin: Peter Lang, 1997

⁴⁰ Discussions of such categories can be found in A.A. van den Braembussche, Historical Explanation and comparative method: towards a theory of the history of society, *History and Theory*, 1989, 28, T. Skocpol and M. Somers, *The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1978, 22, p.174-197

⁴¹ Raymond Grew, *The Case for Comparing Histories*, *The American History Review*, 1980, 84, (4), p.776; Thomas Welskopp, op. cit., p.343

⁴² T. Skocpol, and M. Somers, The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1978, 22, p.174-197; Finn Mygind, Komparativ historisk sociologi, *Den Jyske Historiker*, 1998, 80, J. Matthes, The Operation called "Vergleichen," in J. Matthes, *Zwischen den Kulturen? Die sozialwissenschaften vor dem Problem des Kulturvergleichs*, Göttingen: 1992, esp., p.82-84, Willfred Spohn, Kulturanalyse und Vergleich in der historischen Soziologie, *Comparativ*, 1998, 1

⁴³ B. Flyvbjerg, op. cit., p.154-155

⁴⁴ H. Kaelble makes it clear that types of comparison are rarely fully separate and overlaps are possible: the *Verstehende* comparison, the comparison of identity, the explanatory and evaluative comparison and the analytic comparison all carry traits that interlink in the exploratory comparison, op. cit., ch.4; Migration historians similarly stress the importance of a conceptual history and definition, Nancy Green, The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies, in Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (eds.), *Migration, Migration History, History*, Berlin: Peter Lang, 1997

⁴⁵ Welskopp talk of a minority specialist group of comparative social historians who feel convinced by and therefore promote comparative history as the 'royal way', op. cit., p.340; D. Cohen backs this up with her observation that 'there has been too much work that compares mindlessly, as if comparison were a worthy aim in itself rather than a means to an end'. D. Cohen, op. cit., p.25

⁴⁶ D. Cohen, op. cit., p.30-31

⁴⁷ Kocka and Haupt op. cit., p.12; Kocka (1996), op. cit., p.199

Chapter 2

Background Histories

Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the history of social housing in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Århus and Newcastle. It explores the origins of the divergent solutions sought by the two local authorities in the inter-war period. The main issue to consider is the establishment of social housing associations in Århus as a complement to local authority housing policy, juxtaposed with equivalent developments in Newcastle. Newcastle Council rejected the establishment of housing associations in the North East. The question therefore arises as to why this was the case, and how the Council implemented solutions to the housing problems in the city. In both cases the respective self-perception of the housing authorities will be examined to consider the implications for the developments of a political culture of social housing management carried out after the Second World War.

There is a danger that such a differentiating perspective may create an imbalance in the comparison. It has been suggested in a European comparative context of this period that the unique historical character of Scandinavian housing associations should not be overly accentuated, since it resembled developments in social housing in other countries that deployed corporatist housing strategies.¹ Such caution may be relevant in broad historical comparisons of national policies where corporate structures such as housing associations reflected state concerns for integrating non-governmental bodies in housing provision, and the Danish case could be viewed in this light. Yet the relatively distinct social housing developments during the early twentieth century reveal significant details in the role of municipal socialism, in the case of Århus, with its interest in integrating working class associational culture in building up the city's welfare infrastructure, which the Newcastle's civic leaders tackled through state-guided municipal provision. It is at the urban level that the implications of the different meanings of the two housing systems for later developments in the political culture of social housing can be seen. Before looking at the deeper aspects of the politics of post-war social housing in Århus and Newcastle it is useful to delineate their urban topographies, to map out the early developments of social

housing in the two cities, and illustrate their respective historical contingencies that affected the paths each city's housing developments took.

Århusian landscapes

Århus has historically a strong identity as an independent trading town. At the beginning of the twentieth century it experienced a rapid urban expansion of its industry and demographic constitution. The city lies on the east coast of Jutland, facing the Kattegat Sea. The harbour was a central communicating link to other European seaports, including coal trading contacts with and passenger transportation to Newcastle.² The city's port had expanded from the mid-nineteenth century, increasing its activities with the introduction of the railway.³ In the 1890s Århus became Denmark's most rapidly expanding city, acquiring the epithet 'capital of Jutland' by the 1920s. It had by then consolidated its image as Denmark's second largest city (from 1870).⁴ Århus was also the first provincial city outside Copenhagen to have a university from the 1930s. The city was linked to the wider agricultural regions of Jutland via the railway and main road network, providing the backbone of the city's trade with the outside world. By the middle of the nineteenth century its industries were closely connected to the agricultural sector of Jutland. The city became an export link to Britain and Europe. Major oilseed and grain companies were therefore based in Århus; the national co-operative consumer society (*Forenede Danske Brugsforeninger*, FDB) located its offices and a major factory there, whilst various engineering industries, and a diverse range of smaller artisan workshops provided employment for an urbanised workforce previously employed in agriculture.

The city typifies the industrial development of Denmark as a whole: the agricultural sector held structural interests in the growth of manufacturing industries in the city, while the growing industrial base provided employment for the inward migrating agricultural labourers.⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century smaller companies provided the main source of employment in the city. In 1897 only 5 % of firms employed 20 or more people. 30 % consisted solely of the proprietor, in contrast to one of the city's largest companies, the machine factory, *Frichs efterfølger*, which employed 400 people.⁶ Small crafts-cum-entrepreneurial firms, small traders and food retailers wove themselves within the heart of the urban fabric, often to be found alongside the tightly built housing areas.⁷ Typically for a late urbanised Danish citizenry, the city's working class inhabitants, having newly

arrived from the countryside, brought with them cultural customs that fed into the working class cultures they integrated with.

Århus had been a historical market town upholding trade privileges for its commercial and artisan classes.⁸ A fence had enclosed it until the 1850s, with customs gates regulating trade movements in and out of the city. But the confined nature of their city's territory was a continuing issue of concern to the city's leaders since the city's population growth led to disputes around the city's geographical boundaries. Until the 1920s the city's surrounding areas had consisted mainly of agricultural villages and farms, but with the advent of local railways they became increasingly suburbanised due to cheap tax rates, and attractive surroundings. Small, independent, rural parish councils surrounded the city. They received the outward migrating middle class, who sought comfortable surroundings outside the city, yet wanted the benefits of close proximity to work in central Århus. Initially Århus Council attempted to penalise these groups by enforcing closures on access routes to the city.⁹ Yet, the bounded nature of the city became less feasible as the movement of people and industry expanded.

The city's municipal boundaries nevertheless shaped the urban landscape and the spread of Århusian housing. The interwar years saw the first attempts at urban planning across the neighbouring councils, but they remained ineffectual until the 1950s.¹⁰ With the increase in the suburban population a shift in the nature of the villages took place: technically, they became so-called built-up urban areas (*bymæssige bebyggelser*), yet they remained visibly distinct by their open, low-rise villa housing, contrasting with the much denser urban areas of Århus where flats flanked the city streets.¹¹

Housing densities in Århus

If the suburbs were developing town-like developments, the inner core of Århus by contrast was also feeling the pressure of urban migration. Urbanisation affected both Århus and its surrounding villages. The city followed the Danish trajectory of urbanisation towards the end of the century, continuing to grow into the twentieth century (Table 2.1). But the Århusian figures disguise major differences in growth between the central city area, which was heavily populated and almost fully built up by the 1940s, and the suburban areas, which saw an increased rate of growth during the interwar periods. In

both areas the population drew on inward migrating, mostly young agricultural labourers and farmers. Between 1870 and 1911 the city of Århus quadrupled its population from approximately 15,000 to 61,755, while for suburban parish councils the comparative figures were more modest, from 5,984 to 9,245, a growth of one and a half times. However during the following thirty years saw a trebling of suburban growth, with 28,554 living there by 1940. Århus' population growth had by then slowed: in 1940 it had expanded more than one and a half times to 99,881 inhabitants. It was becoming increasingly clear that managing municipal services within the city would need the collaboration between several neighbouring local authorities, and would affect housing distribution. Yet it was only after the Second World War, with the determination of the municipality of Århus to plan the growth of the city that the notion of a Greater Århus was conceptualised, and this is discussed in more detail in chapter three.¹²

Table 2.1. Population figures for Århus and Greater Århus 1870-1980*

Year	City of Århus	Suburban loc. auth.
1870	15,025	5,984
1880	24,831	5,673
1890	33,306	6,595
1901	51,814	6,634
1911	61,755	9,245
1921	74,256	13,411
1930	81,279	20,987
1940	99,881	28,554
1950	114,344^	
1960	119,489^	
1970	233,162^	
1980	244,393^	

* From the annual statistics developed by Århus Statistical Office, Århus Council: *Statistisk Årbog for Århus*, 1946-1980

^ Greater Århus, from 1970 Århus municipality (after the 1970 local authority restructuring and mergers)

However Danish local government interest in housing reform was not to substantially materialise until after the First World War, despite fledgling initiatives by civic leaders and groups of the enterprising working class to find improved social housing solutions.¹³ Instead the most common tenure for the working social groups of the city was private renting. In the nineteenth century Århus' urban housing had been dominated by private speculative building, supported by a liberal city council.¹⁴ Working class districts such as *Trøjborg*, the *Frederiksbjerg* and *Sjællandsgade* quarters arose to the north and west of the city centre by the turn of the twentieth century (Fig. 2.1).¹⁵ Despite local building regulations determining housing height and volume as well as road widths the Council regularly allowed dispensations from the regulations for private builders.¹⁶ Plots were often small, owned by a single landowner, and were sold off to developers in parcels. This resulted in an uneven street pattern radiating out from the tightly packed medieval street system within the inner city, augmented by the piecemeal process by which the municipality administered urban growth.¹⁷

Houses varied in size and height, built according to the specifications of individual builders, their facades decorated in restrained historicist styles. In the 1880s, early working class flats were small, with an average of two or three small rooms built in blocks or houses two or three storeys high. After 1895, building regulations permitted housing heights of up to five storeys, which provided the opportunity to build more densely, with backyards for workshops, sheds and shared sanitary provisions. Between 1895 and 1926, master builders and joiners' firms constructed large complexes of multi-storey flats.¹⁸



Fig.2.1 A street in the Øgade quarter of Århus, 1920s, showing varying sizes of buildings and the restrained neo-classical style of late nineteenth century speculative housing facades. Lokalthistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker.

Thus the central areas of Århus had the highest concentration of privately rented flats. Measuring the ratio of flats to houses became a convention for civic authorities to gauge adequate housing provision and the figures showed the clear divide between growth in the city and its outskirts: From 1900 until 1944, 90.7 % of all housing in Århus was built as complexes of flats, while detached houses comprised only 9.3 %.¹⁹ Towards the end of the period, between 1938-44, housing in the suburbs by contrast consisted of 54 % flats – while in Århus the figure was 88 %.²⁰ Between 1938 and 1944 there was little difference in the quantity of flats being built between subsidised and un-subsidised construction in Århus. 72 % of housing in Århus was subsidised, of which 89 % was built as flats, while of the 28 % un-subsidised housing 85 % was built as flats. This was a very different situation in the suburban areas, which only consisted of 38 % subsidised, privately and co-operatively built housing, although by far the largest part of this group was also built as flats (82 %). At least in the suburbs there seemed a demarcation between housing types and tenure – with 52 % private housing built as unsubsidised row, semi or detached houses.

Furthermore, within Århus flat design and social practice added to population densities. Small flats for working class families were built well into the 1920s when municipal flats were built as two-roomed dwellings: with one large bedroom, occasionally an additional

small chamber, and a living room. Many working class families compressed themselves within one room to maintain a 'parlour' for best use.²¹ Despite this practice, Århusian housing conditions for the working class were not affected by slum tenements to the degree experienced in Copenhagen. The squalor and poverty of the housing conditions in the capital caused a great deal of concern for social democratic and philanthropic reformers.

Spatial segregation of the Århusian social classes was therefore evident between the urban quarters, while certain multi-storey buildings were socially divided across the block of flats. The upper storeys contained apartments for the better class tenant, while basements or small roof flats were rented by the less well off.²² Shopkeepers commonly lived near their shops located at street-level within tenement blocks. Some independent artisan builders built houses for their own use and would occupy parts of it, renting out the other half to tenants. Two-thirds of the builders in the quarter of *Frederiksbjerg* for example, who built a house for their families, either occupied the house fully or rented part of it to a second household.²³

So the housing situation in Århus, through shifts in property developments impacted on the shape of housing in the city and affected the choices or lack thereof for the incoming working classes. Despite the fledgling efforts of housing projects conceived by small-scale societies that are described below, and despite a social democratic majority in Århus Council by 1909 (from whom it might have been hoped housing solutions would be proposed), new socialised housing forms were slow to appear.²⁴ The next section will consider how, while the Social Democratic Party established itself as the harbinger of Århusian municipal welfare provisions, its close relatives, the trade unions and co-operative societies were nevertheless initiating a budding grass-roots housing system that would lead to the path of social housing in the city.

The rise of social housing Århus

While urban growth and socio-cultural modernity in Århus affected the spatial distribution of housing and the styles of domestic architecture in working class housing, the political culture of social housing and its management was undergoing significant changes. The key role of housing associations to the social life of housing areas was

important, and embedded a message of co-operation and democracy to social groups who would otherwise have found themselves reliant on the vagaries of private renting.

Working class rented housing in Århus had been provided rather piecemeal before the First World War. Little effort had been made by national government to provide social housing in the nineteenth century, relying on the notion of self-help and philanthropy to muddle through.²⁵ Indeed the heaviest burden on housing provision was in the rural areas. Those in most dire need both in rural communities and in cities were confined to poor houses. Albeit Danish pension and sickness legislation saw moves towards welfare provisions that were to enhance the franchise of the deserving poor, the elderly and the sick, social housing followed only slowly as a social right.²⁶

Small urban building societies, nurtured largely by the labour movement, were subject to municipal regulation. They ultimately built dwellings for private homeownership for their members, affecting Århusian social housing developments only marginally. They reflected liberal ideals prevalent amongst farming communities of the sanctity of private property, ideals migrating to the city with urbanisation.²⁷ The Workers' Building Society (*Arbejdernes Byggeforening*) for example was established in 1872, headed by the city's Mayor. It built small clusters of houses scattered across the city, never contributing substantially to working people's housing needs. By 1922 it had built only 109 dwellings and had a membership of 317, but by this time housing associations had become more viable social housing providers in Århus.²⁸ Such small-scale self-help housing projects proved insufficient and the need for shelter increased for the less well off. The question of who should be the providers of a socially accessible housing system was explicitly framed around the crisis of war, demographic shifts and the social changes that impacted on an increasingly industrialised society. In addition, shifts in municipal governance and administration included a gradual expansion of welfare provisions that were to support the growing working population in the city.

Although Århus experienced a strong municipal socialism during the early twentieth century the question of the city's social housing ties in with the history of Denmark's welfare state generally. Århusian social democracy was dominant for long stretches of the century, with a brief interval during the Second World War.²⁹ There are competing

arguments for the origins of the Danish welfare state and the political culture, which structurally underpinned it – the role of social democracy in its development remains a compelling question.³⁰ Was it the compromises between peasant and urban liberals, the red-green alliance that shaped later policies from the late nineteenth century?³¹ Or was it influenced by a longer Lutheran tradition pervading a homogeneous Danish society that influenced a co-operative political culture?³² Some have suggested the value of municipal socialism in cities such as Århus should not be underestimated, while others see the period after 1945 as the defining moment when the Danish welfare state made its strongest impact via the efforts of social democracy and its legitimisation through the uses of technology and expertise.³³ It is suggested here that the combination of a strongly motivated social democratic council and its post-war continuities played a key role in Århus social housing provision. Both during the phase of the city's municipal socialist ambitions in the interwar period, and as the national and local foundations of a social democratic consensus and culture of compromise were expanded after 1945, Århus civic leaders and pro-active citizens embedded a social housing message within the structure of feeling that attempted to involve not only a democratic administrative culture, but also sought to affect the everyday life of local housing areas. The medium for this was to become the housing association, but they arose as an adjunct to the modest municipal efforts at housing provision.

Early post-war municipal housing policy in Århus

The future of the city's social housing grew out of the liberal discussions that also impregnated the public arena of co-operation in the form of a strong associational culture. In the post-war period this culture was modified as will be discussed later, but during the early decades of the twentieth century the role of municipal socialism was equally important in adopting the welfare strategies that sent reverberations into the post-war period. Confronted by a housing crisis, shortages in foodstuffs and growing poverty during the First World War, the Social Democratic Party in Århus consolidated its position and achieved an absolute majority.³⁴ It was local social democracy, backed by the local labour movement that was to become the primary force behind the city's pro-active municipal socialism.

In 1916 the housing crisis in the city affected municipal politics to a previously unchallenged extent, and the municipality for the first time attempted to relieve the problem of homelessness. The city was subject to an historical regulation that determined biannual moving days across the city. This led to an acute presence of evicted tenants and residents, which on the October moving day led to a homeless figure of 129 families, including 458 children.³⁵ But tackling the housing problem only became possible a year later. Until then resistance from the bourgeois parties on the Council had inhibited anything but residual provision of shelter and private renting. Yet as the Council became more socially conscious the city's leaders introduced welfare measures such as municipal housing.

Under the leadership of the Social Democrat Jacob Jensen, a bricklayer and co-initiator of the bricklayers' trade union and the Workers' Production Association the Council engaged proactively in building and supporting social housing. At first municipal emergency housing was basic and of a temporary nature. It employed barracks and rooms in schools to house homeless households - clearly residual housing types for the poorest and most vulnerable social groups.³⁶ Later, however, Århus Council started building more permanent housing that will be discussed below. In any case, early attempts at municipal social housing did little to ameliorate social differentiation or improve pro-active involvement by the poorest in their housing conditions: The social structure of working class tenants was undoubtedly made visible through the housing types rented from the Council.

Tenants renting in interwar Århusian municipal housing were subject to a social hierarchy of tenure - according to the type of rented accommodation the level of stigma increased, barracks being of the lowest order, row houses and flats with modern facilities provided for the better class tenants.³⁷ A group of municipal semi-detached houses for example, was later taken over by a small housing association, which later dissolved. During the continuing housing crisis it became compulsory for tenants living on the ground floor to rent out the upstairs section to a homeless family encouraging a sense of citizen support during stressful times.³⁸ By contrast a growing group of resourceful citizens were reflecting on housing initiatives in Copenhagen, which in the first instance would enable them to building housing for the more affluent working class outside the remit of the local

authority. In the spirit of self-help and echoing the trajectories of the co-operative producer and consumer societies arising from the agricultural movements of the nineteenth century, the social housing associations of Århus arose to complement and further the city's housing provisions.

Thus the position of Århus Council was somewhat ambivalent in its early consideration of social housing. Early projects were residual and provided in a piecemeal manner, while later housing provision was marginal to housing developments across the city. During this period the municipal socialism of Århus has been described partly as an important movement to initiate welfare reforms, but mainly as a force that was restrained and moderate in its policy decisions.³⁹ It has been suggested that the Århusian social democratic social housing policies revealed a Janus-faced approach. Although social democrats were somewhat slow in supporting a public housing system, the deepening crisis during the First World War sharpened political views. With the support of social housing associations the party ideologically inclined towards housing as a social right. On the one hand it retained the inherited liberal social help/poor relief aspect in its provision of residual emergency housing, which was used as a temporary stopgap prior to a more expansive municipal housing provision. On the other hand it promoted the growth of social housing association provision, driven by the Labour Movement. This second source of social housing, which took off in the interwar period, was a more progressive reformist project that pointed forward to the housing welfare initiatives to come.⁴⁰

Municipal housing projects

With the slow appearance of state support in the 1920s the municipality of Århus became able to build robust housing projects in contrast to the transient emergency shelters it had contributed with during the war. One municipal project included a perimeter block in the working class area of Frederiksbjerg.⁴¹ The complex contained 160 flats, 76 of which had 2 rooms, 43 had 2 rooms and a chamber, while 41 had 3 rooms or more. All the flats had a water closet, but only 18 flats had their own bathroom, but were favourably received by the architectural press.⁴² The City Architect also designed a section of two-storey semi-detached houses, divided into joint sections of four flats, in which each ground floor flat had a garden and was to be let to large families.⁴³ With only two rooms to a flat these family dwellings were small. Indeed, small dwellings dominated housing in Greater

Århus: 80 % of all dwellings in the city had only two or three rooms. In retrospect the local authority argued that demand had risen for such smaller dwellings as a result of the provision of modern labour saving equipment in the home, while the falling birth rate was reducing household sizes. Yet such a modernist claim was made by a Council that faced spatial problems - there were fewer urban areas on which to build. The argument can be interpreted as partly rationalising a problem that continued to press on the everyday life of residents.

The previous discussion is confirmed if we look at the housing figures derived from the housing authorities at Århus. Shifts the city's housing policy can be examined from the figures in Table 2.2 that illustrate the implementation of housing provision in the city before 1945. Throughout this period Århus Council only contributed around 8 % of the city's housing, albeit early post war state subsidised housing was given a boost with the advent of housing associations.⁴⁴ The period as a whole was dominated by the private sector, which reached its highest contribution to housing between 1934-37 when it produced 91 % of all new housing. The average annual housing figures for Århus from 1919-1934 suggest that the city's construction overall was sluggish, with only 267 units built annually between 1919-23 (growing to 724 units per year a decade later).⁴⁵ On the other hand, the later Housing Acts of 1933 and 1938 boosted the figures considerably (to 1,058 flats per year during 1934-38).

Table 2.2 Numbers of dwellings constructed in Århus in per cent by constructing authority

	Numbers of flats constructed by*				
	Private Construction %			Housing Associations %	Local Authority/State %
	Without public subsidy	With public subsidy	Total		
1920/21-1923/24	10	32	42	50	8
1924/25-1933	43	35	78	17	5
1934-1937	87	4	91	2	7
1938-1944	32	34	66	23	11
1934-1944	60	19	79	12	9

* From Århus Kommunes Statistiske Kontor, *Økonomiske og Statistiske Meddelelser 1944: Boligbyggeriet i Århus Kommune 1805-1944*, Århus: Århus Kommune, 1945

State grants to promote the construction industry were provided both for the public and the private sector. Apart from state loans and subsidies Århus housing benefited from tax relief on property.⁴⁶ In some cases the promise of a state loan was subject to a requirement for an equal contribution from the local authority.

The Århusian statistics moreover separate the city's municipal building and housing association provision.⁴⁷ This reflects the local perception of the value of housing associations as independent providers. There was a rapid growth of housing association construction immediately after the First World War, although the figure declined in the 1920s. This drop took place despite the efforts of the State Housing Fund (established 1922) to revive social housing.⁴⁸ Another reason for the decline in the 1920s may be that the city's largest housing association, *Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening*, AAB, faced a series of financial crises, leading to demands on members to pay greater deposits, possibly deterring potential members from joining.⁴⁹ Subsidies provided through the State Housing Fund ceased in 1928 and might explain the drastic drop in housing association building during 1934-37.

By contrast, the large growth in un-subsidized private housing provision was a result of changes in private lending institutions, in addition to the higher levels of state loans from 1933.⁵⁰ Inspired by social democratic advances in Sweden Danish social research was employed to develop progressive family policies that would impact on social housing developments. Following a major survey of the social constitution of Denmark preventative social welfare measures were introduced for low-income, large families. Such family oriented policies gave access to personal housing subsidies for tenant households. In addition more advantageous loans for households to take up private ownership were provided.⁵¹ This possibly explains why, after the 1938 Housing Act, partly an outcome of the new family welfare policies, the numbers of private sector dwellings levelled. Each family was eligible for a reduction in its housing costs, subject to the provision of improved dwelling standards of three rooms or more. Advantageous loans and tax benefits were made available to large and poorer families to build a house for private ownership.⁵² Furthermore, the national concern for family welfare increased the level of funding available to social housing associations. This gave impetus to create new associations and for some, to re-orientate their policies to expand and widen the constitution of their residents.

The housing association apparatus in Århus until 1945

It is clear that the housing growth in Århus was dominated by private construction. But as an adjunct to the small-scale municipal social housing provided in Århus an alternative provision for more affluent working people was in the ascendant. Housing associations had been set up in Copenhagen from 1912 to alleviate the capital's housing plight and Århusian initiatives were quick to follow. The Workers' Housing Co-operative (AAB) was established in 1919 with a shareholding membership of 143. It experienced rapid growth over the next two decades: by 1944 the association housed 6,206 people (6 % of the city's population) in its 1,807 dwellings.⁵³ Throughout the interwar period the association dominated social housing provision in Århus. AAB modelled its policy on the association of the same name in Copenhagen, and was one of a burgeoning number of provincial housing associations initiated by members of the Danish labour movement.⁵⁴ It was planned along co-operative lines and therefore quickly became a member of *Det Kooperative Fællesforbund* (the (National) Central Union of the Urban Co-Operative

Societies). It also joined the National Federation of Danish Housing Associations (NFDHA) (*Boligforeningernes Fællesorganisation*) established in 1919 - the national body representing the interests of housing associations. The NFDHA was to become a forceful voice in housing policy matters during the twentieth century as the vagaries of national government policy impinged on its self-understanding as the provider of an ethically based social housing system. In this way AAB became a considerable force within the housing strategies at Århus. With representation on national bodies it closely followed policies of the housing movement generally, but locally made an impact through its administrative culture and the buildings it constructed across the city.

In its early years AAB had strong links with the co-operative building trades in Århus such as the carpenters,' painters' and bricklayers' co-operatives through its co-founder and later chairman, the carpenter Jens Perregård. These co-operatives competed with private construction in the city, but regularly won contracts to build on behalf of AAB, while also supporting major municipal projects such as the building of Århus town hall in the late 1930s.⁵⁵ In addition the trades co-operatives occasionally provided housing welfare for their members, reflecting the collective self-help concerns and possible guild inheritance of the organisation. On the basis of a members' savings facility, the bricklayers' co-operative (*Murersvendenes Stiftelse og Enkekasse*) for example built several housing complexes for widows of workers and aged bricklayers, built to high specifications in a tradition of substantial, bricklayers' craftsmanship.⁵⁶

Social democratic politicians in Århus had no reservations about opening up the housing market to the AAB. Housing associations were, by virtue of their state and local authority subsidies, subject to municipal supervision, while urban co-operatives (the 'third arm' of the labour movement) were embraced by Danish social democracy as a valuable adjunct to the trade union movement in the dissemination of democratic socialist principles.⁵⁷ Indeed this was a way for Danish social democracy to incorporate a modified version of capitalism into its range of economic, employment and welfare strategies. Århus' leading politicians shared the values of housing co-operation as an adjunct to the housing market, and it is characteristic that later Mayors of the city were personally involved with social housing matters, as will be seen in the next chapter.

At the local level it might be asked how the new Århusian housing association related to local government. In what way were AAB's co-operative and later general social housing principles mediated in light of the municipal efforts to modernise the urban fabric and sustain social democratic principles? Although it has been argued that the co-operative nature of landlord and tenant relations of Danish housing associations became less significant over time, it is still important to note that associational regulations persisted in some form throughout the century, yet with a recurrent need to be revived as time went on.⁵⁸ In order to consider the ideals of democratic government in Århus' social housing system it is useful to look in more detail at the constitution of the city's largest housing association.

Democratic culture in the Århusian social housing associations

The fundamental governing principles of Danish consumer and housing co-operation were underpinned by a democratic management rationale. It was from the aims of democratic housing reform that AAB's self-help ideals of co-operation arose:

The association's aim is to reform housing conditions. This is sought attained by transferring the principle of co-operation to housing construction, making members co-owners of their dwellings....

The association seeks to create housing conditions that are good and suitable for society by building both blocks of flats as well as houses with gardens for workers and those of equal economic income at the lowest price possible, so that the 'housing duty' only reflects the amount necessary to pay back loans returns and interests accrued....⁵⁹

This democratic process was from the outset institutionalised and within bureaucratic order of housing association administration (at the end of the twentieth century the democratic process was re-emphasised in housing association policy, discussed in chapter 5). For contemporary writers on the Danish co-operative movement this revealed the deep influence of the pioneering consumer co-operatives in Rochdale, England, that had inspired the Danish agricultural consumer and producer movements continuously from the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ Enabling social housing provision was an important strand of co-operation that would provide a viable alternative to world capitalism.⁶¹ Co-operation spoke to the egalitarian beliefs that seemed fundamental to Danish social democratic political culture and associational life. In housing terms co-operation was to compete with

and provide a viable alternative to private speculation. Its aim was to reflect the vital notion of solidarity:

Modern housing co-operation is particularly social in character. Its special trait is that the constructed dwellings continue to be under shared ownership in order that they will not be taken over by private speculation to the detriment of house prices.⁶²

At the outset policy determined the organisational structures of AAB. It was established and run by a Central Committee, devolving responsibility for local departmental management responsibilities and decision making to local level committees. Despite its policy of politically open membership and neutrality there were signs that its central Committee was from the outset closely linked with the local political leadership of the city: the first Chair of AAB and other executive members of the Committee had strong connections with, or were members of, the local Social Democratic Party.

The central administration of AAB planned and projected new housing to be built, it monitored any major problems facing individual departments, dealt with policy matters and liaised with the local authority. Clusters of dwellings were managed as economically separate departments, with separate departmental representative committees. Local committees were elected by residents based on one vote per household - residents were in turn represented on AAB's central Committee. Departmental meetings took place on a monthly basis, while AAB's Committee held annual general meetings, open to every member of the association. Apart from the fundamental democratic notion of membership influence, the additional principles of open membership, political neutrality and economic membership control underpinned the social housing association's constitution.

AAB's organisation institutionalised its democratic co-operative principles and structured its housing provision with the aim firstly of supporting the needs of the resourceful and respectable working class, as well as other social groups in housing need such as large families. It secondly reflected a cultural dimension that interwove with Århusian urban life. Many of the early committees of housing associations consisted of skilled workers or artisans. One Århusian housing association, Boligforeningen Ringgaarden's first committee for example included a joiner (the Chair), a tram driver, a bricklayer and a painter.⁶³

Accountability and membership

To encourage membership the local press was engaged to advertise for subscriptions. Prospective residents could study new housing projects either first hand on the construction site where further information was provided or in promotional brochures describing new housing schemes.⁶⁴ Members paid a part share or subscription to the housing association at the outset of their membership, a deposit was paid once the tenant moved in. The part sharing principle enabled tenants to become 'residents' (*beboere*) and so denoted co-ownership, an idea of communal ownership that evoked a fundamental difference from private sector renting. It was this deposit and subscription that regulated the social constitution of the membership, and it was only with the introduction of subsidies and loans that the less well off were able to enter the housing association system. Thus, although the openness of the association was assured, only with increased family welfare measures did the social association housing become a viable choice for poorer families. Although social housing democracy was determined by AAB's policy, it was substantiated by social policy measures.

In co-operative housing associations, the capital outlay for new housing projects was based on the ability of members to pay. Yet even as it aimed to provide economic housing for the working classes, AAB was beset with financial problems in the 1920s, and subsequent pressures on its budgets threatened to exclude those groups most in need of social housing.⁶⁵ With an increase in construction costs financial demands would have challenged working people's budgets, and so AAB substituted its core co-operative policy with a self-governing, non-profit making policy that made it a 'general needs' association.⁶⁶

The change in AAB's policy towards general needs was made possible through the 1933 Housing Act. The Act reflected the employment concerns arising from the Depression, aiming to boost employment in the construction industry. State loans to municipalities and housing associations were made available, in order to build for the less well off, who had been incapable of finding accommodation at affordable rents in the private sector.⁶⁷ A host of social welfare measures were defined alongside this Act, through the politically significant *Kanslergade* compromise, that sought to alleviate the ravages of the Depression, and is now seen as an important step towards Danish social democratic

welfare achievements.⁶⁸ The compromise enabled the parties on the left to enforce measures to encourage employment development, while those on the right, particularly Venstre (the Liberals), achieved financial benefits for industry and supported the interests of its agricultural electorate (devaluing the krone, fixing prices on agricultural products and preventing strikes).

Furthermore, since the beginning of AAB's life in Århus the principle of accountability had been inscribed into its housing policy, and the 1933 Housing Act continued to encourage this. In order for social housing associations to benefit from state loans and income generated from older housing programmes to boost their housing provision, any benefit accruing to individual members was prevented, and a local authority appointed representative with no voting powers would be present at Committee meetings. The co-operative notion of profit sharing however was abolished to enable funds to be fed into future housing development and maintenance. At first there was some resistance to this shift from within AAB members' ranks, against the possible strengthening of public intervention.⁶⁹ But there is little evidence that such worries materialised. Rather, family oriented policies supported by the local authority bolstered housing association provision in Århus—support that could only lead to expansion of AAB's remit.

With the 1938 Housing Act further subsidies for the construction of housing for large families (with three or more children) were provided. A co-operative housing association could borrow up to 80 % of its housing costs from the state, yet as a self-governing association this limit was extended to 90-95 % of capital costs for new buildings. Personal housing subsidies were also introduced, provided according to household income and the number of children in the family. Thus it might also have been the 1938 Act, which spurred on the establishment of the Århusian housing association, Ringgaarden.⁷⁰ Certainly during the 1930s, Århusian housing associations had built the largest number of dwellings for the poorest social groups compared to other Danish provincial cities.⁷¹ Despite early hesitancy by the membership over municipal intervention, AAB later embraced the friendly relations held with the City Council.⁷²

Popular engagement with the spirit of democratic values

How did the housing association address its philosophy of social and housing equity to its membership, most commonly families, who were mostly concerned with domestic matters? The political culture of social housing associations as a solidaristic form was central to the collective consciousness of the Danish housing movement. It is characteristic that each housing association was celebrated for its expression of co-operative ideals and the progressive achievements of architectural modernity that was shared within the national housing movement. Although it became more obvious after the Second World War, the dominant presence of AAB in Århus in the interwar period reveals how this ideology of unity within the housing association was assumed.

A key source for an understanding of the message of co-operative unity in the housing association was the popular publications AAB published for its residents. From 1929 AAB published anniversary booklets on the occasion of its major anniversaries: 25 years (1944), 50 years (1969) and 75 years (1994).⁷³ The custom of publishing such celebratory booklets continued throughout the twentieth century and was a means of celebrating the association's achievements.⁷⁴ They were written in an accessible format and the narratives of the publications projected the positive and optimistic front of a highly engaged housing association, committed to work on behalf of Århusian member-residents. Any crises appearing in the narrative were absorbed as part of the life of the organisation, granting the history a level of honesty and transparency:

The author imagines that he will provide a bit of insight into the work [of AAB], not only as it reveals itself to the spectator, who only sees buildings made in stone, and plans laid out in ways that will arouse his sense of a practical dwelling or interest his sense of aesthetics, but also touch upon the inner life with its struggles and victories.... how the very difficult circumstances for housing construction in Århus after the war at times seemed to crush the little group [of executive members].....⁷⁵

The heroic persistence and social conscience of the central Committee members would filter outwards to members in their homes. During the Second World War the heightened sense of patriotism and community life assumed to lie at the heart of individual housing departments became more explicit. The heavily illustrated anniversary publications anchored the popular message of the importance of associational life to Danish culture to social housing messages of progress in provision, in design and domestic comfort.

In addition, the symbolic nature of Danish domestic architecture provided by housing associations reflected shifts in the commitment by architects to stylistic fashions. Such styles were defended through professional debates on the role of architecture in a democratic society - how the debate related to the local social housing provisions after 1945 will be studied in more detail in the next chapter. Early Århusian social housing adopted garden city principles, although clauses in AAB's policy equally referred to the provision of flats. As in other countries in Europe the British garden city idea pervaded early twentieth century Danish architectural thought.⁷⁶ One housing area, *Skovbakken*, was built during the early 1920s as a group of 29 semidetached houses on the outskirts of Århus. A later project, *Riisvangen*, was built to comply with a request by the local authority for a 'villa' area, providing 70 semidetached houses (Fig. 2.2). To facilitate access to amenities for local residents the housing association became part-shareholder in local co-operative shops.



Fig. 2.2 Riisvangen built by AAB on the outskirts of Århus, 1920s, AAB, *Vi Bygger selv*, Århus: AAB, 1944

Apart from the internationally inspired garden city form, members of the association toured modern housing areas in Copenhagen to learn from the latest developments in Danish domestic architecture. Large perimeter blocks of flats (*karreer*) built around a central yard with landscaped planting for shared use were built during the interwar period by the association and the local authority. Examples include AAB's *Teglgaarden* (completed 1926-27) (Fig. 2.3), *Ingerslevgaarden* (1928) and *Marselisgaarden* (1938). Such large projects were sometimes the result of architectural competitions, reflecting a professional business relationship with private architectural practices. Collaborative

partnerships between housing associations and architects became more intimately connected after 1945.

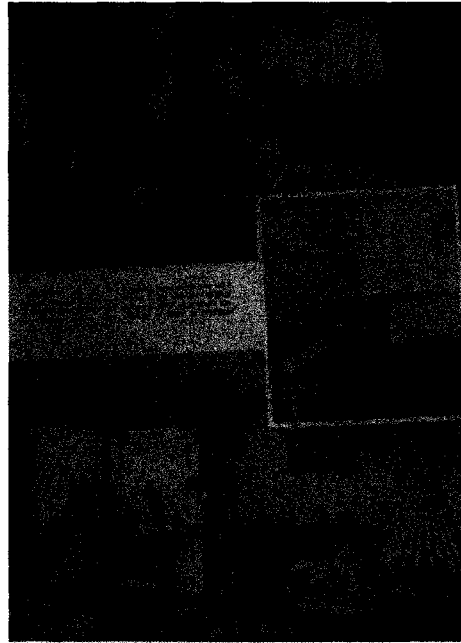


Fig. 2.3 In AAB's 1944 anniversary publication '*We build for ourselves*' (transl.), *Marselisgaarden* and *Ingerslevgaarden* featured as the most current examples of well-appointed family housing. The flats appeared in the background of the fronticepiece, and inside the publication furnished living rooms and a modern kitchen were emphasised as bringing cosiness (*hygge*) and modernity to the home. AAB, *Vi Bygger selv*, Århus: AAB, 1944

These flatted complexes provided the latest amenities for residents and fulfilled the demands of modern architectural principles. Collective facilities such as shared laundry facilities, as well as shared gardens and play areas were proudly presented as results of the co-operative idea, as 'monuments to the spirit of harmonious living' that would live up to residents' higher expectations.⁷⁷ *Marselisgaarden* was to represent AAB's material contribution to modern living in the city:

The new complex should satisfy all reasonable demands for modernity in the way of bays, balconies, bathrooms, waste disposal chutes, central heating, steam washing boilers, spinners, drying rooms, ironing rooms etc.⁷⁸

Information about the flats was disseminated to future residents through brochures, and drawings of projects under construction might be provided for prospective tenants, or were advertised in the local press.⁷⁹ As housing associations became the main provider of social housing in the city the material presence in the form of flats and houses, and the dissemination of its popular political ideals that echoed wider social democratic sentiment became an important symbol of the city's commitment to socially provided housing.

On the whole, as an alternative to the private sector, Danish housing associations held the promise of providing high quality housing to working class households. Regulated and financially supported by state and local authority they retained a degree of autonomy that carried traces of a philosophy of co-operation and social equality, albeit that their early constitutions in the main benefited the respectable working class. The Århusian municipality was distinctly marginal in the direct provision of social housing before the Second World War. It accepted the administrative capacity of associations to manage the day-to-day concerns of housing areas from within local areas. Yet it was perhaps not inevitable that the housing association became the favoured solution, but was a result of the reticence of the local authority to place itself as the central pillar of social housing provision. The knowledge and sensitivity towards a more modern, democratic way of living could be substantiated in the houses and flats the housing associations built, reflected and reinforced through images and text in popular publications, while the structure of associations themselves, encouraging involvement by members embedded the sense of shared provision of social housing.

Turning now to the social housing provision in Newcastle before 1945, the most obvious difference to Århus was the absence of housing associations in the English city. It will be shown that Newcastle Council had the opportunity of accepting a degree of provision through housing associations, but resisted their contribution enabling the municipality to take full control over its social housing provision.

Newcastle: an industrial landscape

In common with other major British industrial cities, Newcastle had already been an important urban development since the early part of the nineteenth century.⁸⁰ Trade and industry in Newcastle and its neighbouring towns were geographically centred around the

river Tyne, where the coal and heavy engineering industry, marine transport and related commercial interests had been expanding since the early nineteenth century.⁸¹ The narrow range of large industries and the decline in opportunities for expansion in manufacturing in Newcastle played an inhibiting role in the city's economic development in the twentieth century.⁸² Newcastle and the Tyneside region's reliance on export trades in coal mining and engineering made it vulnerable in the face of international competition and fluctuations in demand.⁸³ Early in the century the problem of industrial and economic decline was kept at bay, buoyed up by the needs of the machinery of war, but interwar depression revealed the fragility of a limited industrial sector. Despite attempts throughout the twentieth century to nurture the local economy, the banking and retail sectors that came to dominate the city centre of Newcastle could not alleviate the greater part of the city's contracting industries.⁸⁴ Thus the weight of the industrial culture of the city was also felt in the area of housing for the working classes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The city experienced great pressure on its working class housing areas for long periods of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The city's social housing strategies traced the trajectories of socio-economic development in Newcastle, while the impact of war and fiscal crises propelled optimistic longings for modernity and improvement in housing and urban planning.

Working class housing in Newcastle

Housing areas for workers in Newcastle were erected near the main sites of employment along the river Tyne. With continuous population growth in the city throughout the nineteenth century demographic pressure increased the need for working class housing (Table 2.3). Housing areas arose in areas such as Walker and Byker to the east and Benwell and Elswick to the west where key shipbuilding and engineering companies lay, while the middle class suburb of Jesmond expanded to the northeast.⁸⁵ The city's housing stock suffered from overcrowding and squalid living conditions for large groups of the urban working population, leading Karl Marx to exclaim against the 'housing inferno' in Newcastle in 1864.⁸⁶

Early nineteenth speculative housing in Newcastle was built within small units of property ownership. Housing estates could to some extent be planned from the outset by large landowners belonging to the industrial bourgeoisie, who determined the layout of

their estates prior to the sale of their land.⁸⁷ Land was broken into parcels to enable small building firms to purchase the freehold. With national housing policies only sluggishly making inroads to provide housing for working people, Newcastle relied on local byelaws to facilitate healthier working class housing. The street layout in Newcastle at the end of the nineteenth century therefore followed a rigid municipal byelaw regime. The Tyneside flat became a typical byelaw house-form, lining the characteristically northern English gridiron street system (Fig. 2.4).

Table 2. 3. Population figures of Newcastle upon Tyne 1871-1961

Year	Newcastle upon Tyne*
1871	131,198
1881	150,252
1891	196,817
1901	233,644
1911	250,825
1921	275,009^
1931	283,156
1951	291,724
1961	269,678

* 1871-1901 figs. cited in M. Barke and M. Calcott, *Municipal Intervention in Housing: constraints and Developments in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1835-1914*, in B. Lancaster (ed.), *Working Class Housing on Tyneside 1850-1939*, Berwick: Berwick Press, 1994, p.10

^ Census figs. 1921-1961 incl. the County Borough of Newcastle,

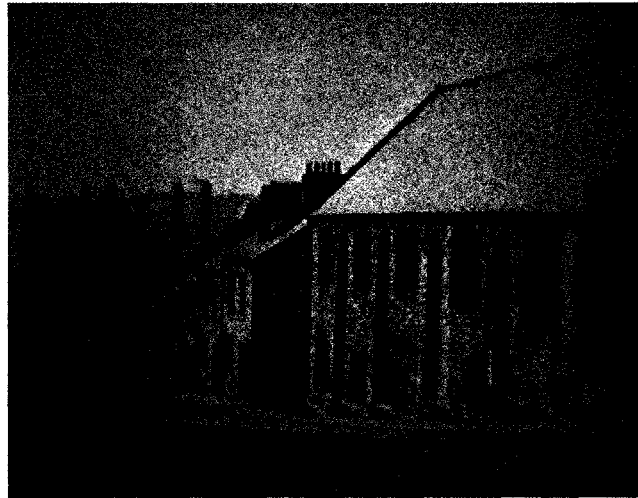


Fig. 2.4 A street scene from Newcastle 1950s, looking down towards the Tyne. The typical small working class terraced houses from the late nineteenth century were in many cases condemned as threatening to health and nurturing family welfare by mid-century. From F.J. Miller et al., *Growing up in Newcastle upon Tyne*, London: The Nuffield Foundation, 1960

The Tyneside flat became symbolic of the socio-cultural structures of living that embedded inherited customs with contemporary modernising ambitions for tenants in private rented accommodation. Some historians have suggested that the Tyneside flat became a local, institutionalised house form that ensured an element of social control by dividing public and private space in the city.⁸⁸ In creating an open urban form Tyneside byelaw housing made public space more visible, while domestic privacy became paramount.⁸⁹ The cultural notion of the sanctity of the home, so firmly anchored in nineteenth century middle class life seemed to filter down to working class domestic architecture.⁹⁰ Yet the Tyneside flat also materially improved general housing standards for tenants.⁹¹ Its particular form seems to have arisen as a result of several locally specific influences: the topographically and historically bounded nature of the city of Newcastle, and the provision of affordable housing for working people. Over time the Tyneside flat became defined through local regulation, continuing an 'inertia' of this local housing type.⁹² Others have suggested that subtle form of social control arose from the external design of the flats, which imposed the hegemony of middle class values, the ideal of the cottage, on an urbanised and highly compact system of flats rented by the respectable working classes.⁹³

Indeed the inheritance of Tyneside flats seemed to some to inhibit the progress of modernity in Newcastle. A contemporary social observer, Henry Mess, noted that ‘...the long rows of flats will be the problem of tomorrow’ – rightly predicting that the process of modernisation in Newcastle would continue to be sluggish - by 1911 56 % of the city’s population still lived in flats.⁹⁴ The slow progress to alleviate the city’s overcrowding led to the observation that flat living and thus over-crowding in working class neighbourhoods was due to ‘a custom of habit of mind,’ or otherwise, a ‘housing tradition.’ Henry Mess paradoxically evoked the slums of the area as providing ‘some compensation in the dignity and picturesqueness which comes from a long history.’⁹⁵ It would appear that in this interpretation the material structure of the Tyneside flat was the result of a set of cultural habits affecting the way of living for working class tenants. For social reformers such cultures of living required a level of support rather than upheaval. It was suggested that one solution to relieve overcrowding was to convert large houses to flats and to appoint women housing managers to oversee their management.⁹⁶ This was indeed what a Newcastle housing trust did in the west end of the city, but it never found favour with the City Council. For its part the municipality early on showed reluctance to intervene in the city’s housing provision. Yet as local contingencies enhanced the housing problem for working people and legislation facilitated its involvement efforts were made to build up municipal housing provision.

Newcastle – Developing a council housing system

Efforts to alleviate the growing pressures on working class housing were slow to appear before 1914. But the trajectory of developments in national housing legislation and the perception of the municipality as the provider of services by the city’s residents moved the housing authority on to engage with housing policies in specific ways. Albeit that the municipality was given powers to clear slums and provide new housing through the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act there was at first much resistance to initiate public intervention in housing. The liberal-dominated Council favoured speculative housing development over direct intervention - indeed there were signs that Council representatives had vested interests in property.⁹⁷ Instead housing for the working classes was improved by imposing byelaw standards on private landlords, determining the widths of houses, regulating access to private spaces, the size of backyards, and commonly subdividing houses in the form of the Tyneside flat, as was described earlier.

The city had urbanised from the early decades of the century when the clergy and social reformers had petitioned the Council to work with the national legislation that enabled intervention in slum formation and insanitary housing.⁹⁸ The city's lack of adequate housing, with rents too high for the poorest, and the subsequent need to generally improve the quality and access to the housing stock, later became issues of concern for charities and trade unions, who compelled the Independent Labour Group to adopt a more active role in housing matters. In order to move beyond renting in private speculative housing as the only choice for working people, some Independent Labour representatives in Newcastle fought for an expansion in the provision of municipal housing during the decade leading up to the First World War. Housing became the 'most clear cut and most fiercely fought local example of the developing 'socialism' of the local Independent Labour Party.'⁹⁹ The Party pressurised the Housing of the Poor Sub-Committee to build more houses, more quickly, for 'the poorest of the poor,' even if it would be at a cost to the ratepayer. If it was possible to expend rate funds on leisure sites, the Newcastle Independent Labour Party saw no reason why housing to replace overcrowding could not be similarly funded.¹⁰⁰ The municipalisation of social housing in this way came to reflect the polarisation of political interests, within the Council.

The role of the Housing of the Poor Sub-Committee, under the remit of the Sanitary Committee, eventually attempted to expand the municipal housing stock through the powers of the 1890 Housing Act. Under Part III of the Act Newcastle Council had powers to provide housing for general needs, but such dwellings were dominated by complexes of tenements, that at times became difficult to let, due to rent costs and concurrent vacancies in the private rental sector.¹⁰¹ In 1906 the Sub-Committee suggested that a two room flat would house two people per room, but this was raised to three people per room a year later.¹⁰² The one-room tenements were targeted at families of three people and did little to alleviate overcrowding. The family group would consist of two adults and a child, or single parent groups. As tenements were difficult to let the flats were promoted by a resident caretaker, who collected rents, and undertook repairs, while leaflets could be distributed to families through 'Lady Health Visitors.'¹⁰³ The gendered nature of housing management was taking shape: the material maintenance of housing administration a masculine responsibility, the social and health welfare aspect of housing seemingly a feminine dimension. Social housing developments across the city were uneven. Although

the poorest groups of tenants were dependent on the Council's ad hoc intervention through tenement construction, other groups, the more resources working social groups were becoming aware of the possibilities for advancement in their housing conditions.

Cottage estates and their meaning in Newcastle

General awareness of model villages in Britain and Newcastle's own plans for garden city type estates were given a presence in the local press. There is little sign that any alternative to the municipality as housing provider was available to capture the housing imagination of people. Outside of the official lines of council housing management the city's citizens were demonstrating their awareness of Newcastle's housing problems, and working class citizens called explicitly for intervention by the Council. In two letters from industrial workers, respectively from the Elswick Works and Messrs. C.A. Parsons & Co's Heaton works, it was impressed on the Council that as ratepayers these workers expected 'a comprehensive scheme of town planning to the Council's estates of Walker and Willington' in the style of large houses, ideally with three to five rooms, baths, kitchens and gardens.¹⁰⁴ For the local working class the local authority was the natural key provider of housing for their families. The style of house they expected evoked contemporary garden city ideals.

It was not a lack of good examples that prevented Newcastle Council from finding constructive social housing solutions. Both national and international housing exhibitions and conferences aroused the interest of the Labour-led Housing of the Poor Sub-Committee, although there are few signs the Council at a whole aimed for wider international networks.¹⁰⁵ Sub-Committee members travelled amongst other places to Letchworth garden city and Liège to visit new model housing projects. Modern internationalist aspirations were modestly finding their way into the discourse of Newcastle Council's work, intermingled with British garden city ideology. Suffice it to say that a notion of cross-cultural comparison and international learning and policy transfer was tentatively accepted, and that it encouraged some members of the Sanitary Committee to look beyond its own inherited traditions. It almost opened up the possibility of different approaches to housing the poor. However national and local contingencies at the same time seemed to inhibit such novel, progressive developments.

In this way Newcastle Council encountered the demand of local citizens for quality housing, while it found models in contemporary domestic architecture that might present practical solutions. The Walker model housing estate was an early example of municipal intervention that suggested its ideological and architectural aspirations that might meet modern expectations. Indeed its construction even pointed to possible collaborative ventures between the Council and other agencies. The Walker estate was exhibited in 1908 by the Council as an example of an ideal cottage community suggested by garden villages such as Bournville. It shared the 'model estate' with the Wallsend Co-Operative Society suggesting the possibility of collaborative housing projects between the local authority and a co-operative. However, even if the estate had seemed to open up a shared space - the public and co-operative agencies ultimately contributed a minority of housing on the estate: building a group of 28 houses out of a total of 80 dwellings.¹⁰⁶ The co-operative moreover, despite representing working class self-help, built for individual ownership and would not have had the capacity to build for poorer social groups. Indeed there were signs that Labour politicians resisted co-operative collaboration in housing provision on the Walker estate.¹⁰⁷

The civilising effects of good housing standards were generally inaccessible to the poorest social groups. Instead the Walker estate was aimed at a respectable working class who might be induced to learn the civilising codes of tasteful living.¹⁰⁸ Labour Councillor David Adams admired such projects for their reduced densities, and green and open areas. Model housing schemes represented a 'revolution' by architects, who could design integrated housing areas for a variety of social groups, not only for respectable working people, but for what Adams termed 'the new class' - a section of poorer tenants who might be catered for with slightly higher densities of 24 houses to the acre, compared to the 12 to 14 houses per acre that a model estate provided (Fig. 2.5).¹⁰⁹



Fig. 2.5 An illustration of a proposed set of semidetached houses for the Walker Estate showing the lay-out of a two bedroom house with a bath room. D. Adams, *The Planning and Development of the Walker and Willington Estates*, Newcastle: Newcastle Labour Representative Committee, 1908

Adams was in no doubt that the provision of this improved cottage style for housing would benefit the population in terms of citizenship:¹¹⁰

....in the endeavour [to build garden cities] our fathers will restore to our labouring classes that which the industrial age has filched from them – pride and love of home, and the quiet joys of domestic life, from which springs true local patriotism, public spirit, and devotion to social service.¹¹¹

For this Labour politician the development of citizenship was premised on the right to a separate sphere of dignified domesticity. There was in this view no mention of complimentary housing providers to Newcastle Council's provision. Despite the rhetorical claim for the value of municipal housing as the bearer of improved social standards for the poorest, Newcastle Council neglected the potential for expanding its housing remit: social housing concerns continued to be residual.¹¹² It is ironic that the public spirit towards housing from within the Council was sorely low, as there was a reduced rate of attendance by local Councillors on the Housing Committee's meetings throughout this period.¹¹³ Due to the problem of high costs, the focus on the garden city model concentrated Council debates on the value of private provision, and so neglected, and indeed exacerbated, the decline in the worst housing stock.¹¹⁴

Before the First World War Newcastle Council was at best supportive of a local authority housing strategy, at worst it closed off the potential for collaborative housing ventures with working class groups from below. This orientation around the municipality's centralised power to define its housing strategy was further reinforced during the 1930s when the option to establish links with a non-profit housing association arose, which is discussed later.

Interwar social housing provisions in Newcastle

Shortly after the First World War the developments in publicly funded housing made it possible to build greater numbers of local authority housing to higher standards than pre-war housing (see Table 2.4). Here was a chance for the Council to build its favoured housing type, which in a modified form followed the guidelines provided by 1919 Housing and Town Planning Act. Housing historians have suggested that the concern for social stability by preventing 'revolutionary' impulses, spurred on this nationally initiated, but locally implemented housing strategy, the homes fit for heroes.¹¹⁵ As the Chair of Newcastle's Housing Committee, James Smith, put it:

.... [he] asked the Council to realise what it meant to our working women to be shut up within the four walls of a dreary building, in a drab and dreary street. Our men would come back to the single room and two-room dwellings.... Let us see to it that they come back to real homes. Let us teach them, if necessary, to want a good standard of life; and for that they needed good homes.¹¹⁶

In the early 1920s housing allocation policies were distinctly aimed at homecoming servicemen. Highest priority was given to ex-servicemen and widows of such men in overcrowded conditions or with no dwelling of their own.¹¹⁷ But it was also noted that the cost of rents against falling wages was the main reason that applications were made for housing exchanges, to enable tenants to move away from the new, and previously celebrated, Walker estate.¹¹⁸

Table 2.4. Distribution of housing construction by sector in Newcastle

	Numbers of flats constructed by (Newcastle)+			
Year	Private construction %			Local Authority %
	Without public subsidy	With public subsidy	Total	
1920/21-1923/24	31	9	40	60
1924/25-1933	34	11	45	55
1934-1937	69	0	69	31
1938-1944	68	0	68	32
1934-1944	69	0	69	31

+ From George Kenyon, *Housing Report 1955*, Newcastle City Council, Housing Committee, 1955

Furthermore, the best quality council housing certainly seems to have created selective positioning of tenants. The City Treasurer was given discretionary powers to allocate housing according to tenants' income and capacity to pay rent. Hence a 'filtering' of tenants took place, sorting them by levels of respectability.¹¹⁹ The Pendower estate to the west of Newcastle was designed as a 'reproduction of an old English village,' to the garden city formula, while other areas built to these improved standards were High Heaton and other areas of Walker.¹²⁰ In comparison with Newcastle's other interwar estates Pendower distinctly housed a respectable working class, 20% of which were non-manual workers; while in contrast the later Cowgate estate (an area built for re-housing slum tenants in the 1930s) housed only 6.5% of this group.¹²¹

Yet despite such suggestions as to a concern for the social constitution of its tenant base the Housing Committee rejected the notion of a management system that would consider welfare alongside more technical landlord responsibilities. In rejecting a proposal for an Octavia Hill style housing management process that could be seen working in situ in nearby Tynemouth Newcastle's Housing Committee seemed to prioritise the material provisions of housing above the social.¹²²

Thus the priority seemed to highlight increases in growth of the municipal housing stock in Newcastle, as the Council continued to face problems of over-crowding in the older housing areas. There had been many advances in new housing provision. The 1924 Wheatley Act had enabled 6,104 houses to be built under the auspices of 'general needs,' much of it in High Heaton and Walker to the east of the city, and mainly at Delaval, and Two Ball Lonnen to the west. As national legislation shifted to provisions for slum clearance Newcastle Council had built replacement housing at St. Anthony's and in the Scotswood and Benwell areas in the city's West End (Fig. 2.6). A five-year plan was initiated in 1933, which saw the construction of 4,727 dwellings, housing 24,108 people, many from slum areas.¹²³ But the housing shortage remained unrelieved with continuing overcrowding and large numbers of outdated housing types. It became apparent that with the standardisation of state funded housing the qualitative difference between the old stock and the modern housing standards became even greater.¹²⁴ There was a continuing need for new housing, which the Council was unable to fulfill, while tenants required attention as dependants of their landlord.

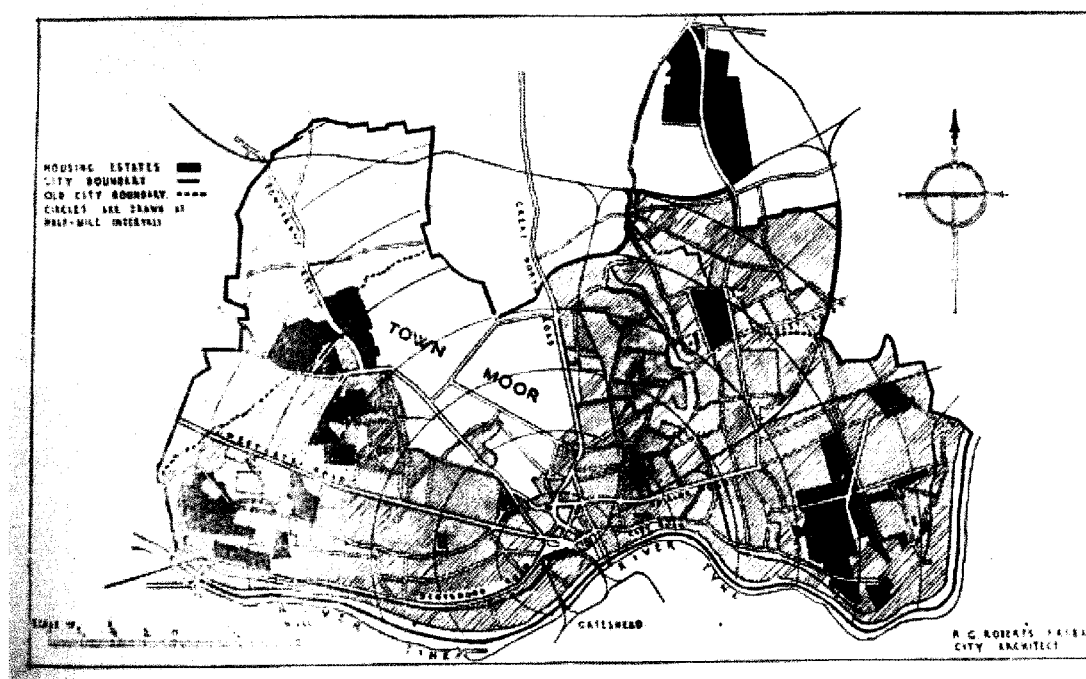


Fig. 2.6 Council housing estates marked (black) on a map of Newcastle, 1938. The northern most council estate at this time lay in Heaton, while the estates at Walker and St Anthony's are seen in the east end of the city. R.G. Roberts, *Housing in Newcastle upon Tyne*, *International Federation for Housing and Town Planning*, 1938, (1), p.5-12

Newcastle Council's modernisation of domestic housing styles

Housing design in Newcastle adhered to national conventions of social housing design.

The guidelines for council housing in Newcastle in the 1920s arose from the 1919

Housing Manual and Tudor Walters report, improving social housing standards greatly.¹²⁵

To interpret government guidelines the Property Surveyor's Department employed its first municipal architect, R. G. Roberts ARIBA.¹²⁶ Typical designs included three-bedroom

semi-detached houses with or without a parlour, each with a bathroom and separate WC.

Towards the end of the 1920s, as costs were cut and dimensions reduced the WC was included in the bathroom and room dimensions shrunk, moving towards the lower quality housing provided in the 1930s that was built as replacements for slum clearance.

The process of renewing and modernising the twentieth century city seemed to continuously provide challenges to modern technical solutions. The message from the council's architect was buoyant: in his report to an international audience of town planners and architects in 1938 Roberts highlighted flatted developments as rational,

functional and economic.¹²⁷ Although 1,352 houses had been demolished between 1933 and 1938, and 3,104 new had been built, Newcastle still faced a deficit of 2,609 houses. In fact, Roberts suggested, despite the 1935 Housing Act, that enabled local authorities to overcome over-crowding on behalf of the poorest families, Newcastle was still suffering a severe housing problem.¹²⁸ Urban growth continued, over-crowding and slum formation were proceeding apace, as old areas were gradually experiencing multi-occupancy. Although Roberts acknowledged that the suburban cottage was the favourite form, he defended the tenement as a necessary housing type in areas where workers required dwellings near their employment. He indirectly referred to modern town planning strategies in London and elsewhere rejected the idea of satellite towns as 'utopian' for Newcastle.

Roberts illustrated his article with images of tenements with flats roofs, and balconies evoking Continental Modernist architectural projects, attached to an otherwise undecorated façade (Figs. 2.7, 2.8). Flats on the ground and first floor had two bedrooms on the same level as the service rooms, with maisonettes above. Despite the later unpopularity of the maisonette, the type was described as '.....being successful because in construction it is inexpensive, and because it ensures a greater degree of family insulation than those which necessitate common staircases and balconies.'¹²⁹

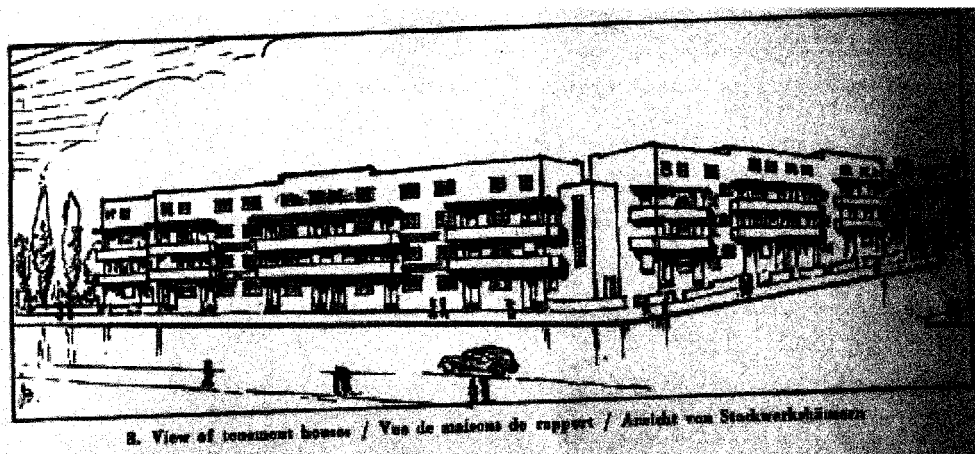


Fig. 2.7 An illustration of tenement flats designed by Newcastle's City Architect and represented in the journal *International Federation for Housing and Town Planning* for an international professional audience. The block appears as an International Modern Style white walled structure. R.G. Roberts, Housing in Newcastle upon Tyne, *International Federation for Housing and Town Planning*, 1938, (1), p.10

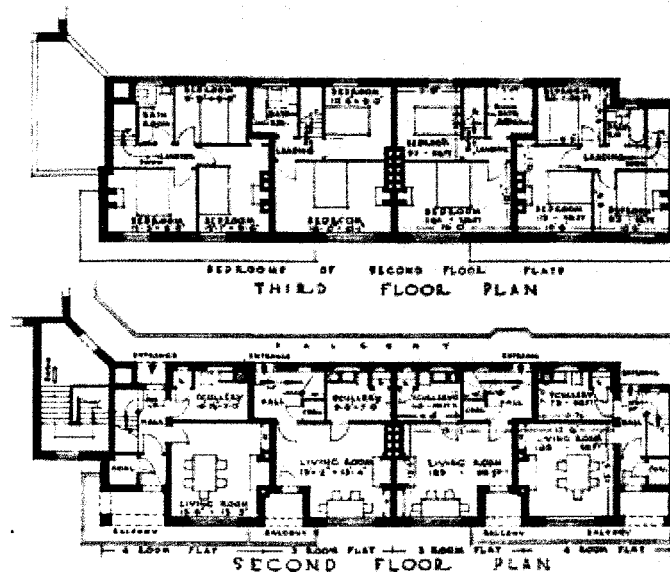


Fig. 2.8 Detail of the second and third floor plans for two and three bedroom maisonettes in the tenements shown in Fig. 2.6. The ground and First floor levels were two bedroom single-storey flats. R.G. Roberts, Housing in Newcastle upon Tyne, *International Federation for Housing and Town Planning*, 1938, (1), p.10

It is tempting to see the municipal use of flats in this way as an up-dated and legitimised means of continuing a local housing tradition of small flats, veiled in the international language of Modernist architecture. The flats no longer had projections of service rooms extending from the back of the building as byelaw housing often did, since modern prescriptions demanded access to light and air. Municipal housing evoked public service, a sensibility very different from the private provision of the Tyneside flats they were built to replace. They were built according to the rationale of cost and expediency in terms of construction methods, costs and speed. So, bearing in mind his international audience of planners and architects, Roberts would have been concerned with affirming the notion of a modern, minimal (*existenzminimum*) dwelling.¹³⁰ Yet, despite this internationalist optimism, flats ultimately did not play a big part in the Council's interwar construction: only 15.6 % of its housing was built as flats, the majority being small – 99 % had between one and four rooms, while 56 % of houses contained four rooms or more.¹³¹

Rejecting a collaborative housing system

The urgency to act in the face of dire housing need was heightened further during the economic crisis of the 1930s in Britain as a whole and in Newcastle more specifically. Housing densities on Tyneside continued to be high and the population was growing. Census figures showed that densities nonetheless did go down – but remained high - in the interwar period, from 33.6 % living two people to a room in 1921 to 23.3 % in 1931¹³² - explained by the growing numbers of larger dwellings being built to provide for general needs in the 1920s and those replacing slum clearance in the 1930s.¹³³ Moreover, the pressure on the social and economic life as the city of Newcastle suffered the consequences of the Depression was great and subject to government legislation.

In order to alleviate the effects of the Depression on the most deprived areas national government in 1934 set up the Special Area Commissions as an agency to improve local economies most urgently in need. Its general objective was to provide opportunities to diversify industrial development, and enable schemes for boosting employment through state subsidies.¹³⁴ Apart from its economic remit in the region the Special Area Commission for Tyneside investigated the possibilities of expanding social housing provision in the region. Since it was unable to give grants for housing purposes directly to local authorities, the Commission and the Ministry of Health agreed to appoint a housing association to the north east of England, to which it was able to provide subsidies under the 1935 Housing Act.¹³⁵

A number of British local authorities resisted the implementation of housing associations in their areas, and Newcastle Council was no exception. Here was a means for the city to show its independence from central government, while retaining its hold on municipal housing provision. Indeed any construction interests in the city would have been cautious about allowing another mayor player into the local housing market. But opposition to the potentially undemocratic status of state appointed housing associations perhaps reveals a fear that they would become unaccountable vehicles for a Conservative government policy in the city.¹³⁶ Unsurprisingly, when the Special Commission for the region proposed the establishment of the North East Housing Association (NEHA), trade unions and local authorities in the area protested vigorously.¹³⁷

Nevertheless a joint representation to the Newcastle Housing Committee in 1936 by the Chair and Secretary of the North East Housing Association (NEHA) and Committee members of the Newcastle upon Tyne Housing Improvement Trust presented statements to encourage greater collaboration with the municipality.¹³⁸ The NEHA attempted to reassure the Council of their scepticism about a second player in social housing provision. The North East Housing Association's proposal included a joint committee with Newcastle Council. The local authority would in this way take an active part in the venture with NEHA – being given responsibility for financial scrutiny of and powers to authorise the housing association's housing management activities.

The association's housing would be built to relieve slum clearance and overcrowding in continuation with government policy, while the local authority would retain the right to allocate tenants. Financing the association's work would initially be based on funds from the Public Works Loans Board and be guaranteed by the local authority. Later, rents and subsidies from the Ministry of Health and the local authority would support housing development, while the Special Area Commissioner would pay out the difference between the actual rent costs and the rent paid by tenants. The local authority had powers to scrutinise the association's finances, and could withdraw its support if it felt the association's activities were becoming unsound. Ultimately, should the association fail, its housing stock would revert to the local authority. Furthermore, Newcastle Council should be reassured that the association was to be non-profit making and checks existed to prevent conflict of interest by NEHA's Board members.¹³⁹

There was little evidence from this policy that the housing association would function in a role other than as an adjunct to local authority housing policy, and that is the way it eventually functioned in places such as Cumberland.¹⁴⁰ The purpose of the housing association was not to replace municipal housing. Neither does it seem to have been an extraordinary threat to local representative democracy as its responsibilities were to the elected Council of the city. Yet, members of the Board were nevertheless appointed by central government through the Special Areas Commissioner rather than appointed by the local authority. In the final count the Housing Committee rejected the housing association's offer.¹⁴¹ It had in a similar vein advised against handing over the Council's housing management to a Housing Management Commission.¹⁴²

The Housing Committee's decision probably reflects a concern with the democratic underpinnings of the Committee of the NEHA. Its Chair, Lord Ridley, was heavily involved in the North East Development Board and a Director of the North-East Trading Estates. He actively supported the government's regionalist objectives to unify industrial organisations, and thus his involvement with the NEHA might have denoted a philanthropic, *noblesse oblige*, provision towards poorer social groups in the city.¹⁴³ An alternative housing authority to municipal provision took decisions away from Newcastle's Housing Committee, and so it may have been concerned of its housing responsibilities being ousted from its remit.¹⁴⁴ Unfortunately no further debates are recorded to substantiate this representation.

For its part, the Newcastle upon Tyne Housing Improvement Trust requested financial support from the Council under the 1935 Housing Act. It hoped to expand its activities from tackling piecemeal slum improvements as it had done from its inception in 1929, to develop whole streets.¹⁴⁵ The Trust had originally been established as a Public Utility Society (PUS) to ameliorate working class housing, and as many other British interwar PUSs was severely limited financially.¹⁴⁶ It had by 1936 converted 50 houses into flats, but as Newcastle Council rejected subsidising complementary housing providers, its activities continued to be restricted and by 1941 it had only converted another 10.¹⁴⁷ Although it has been suggested that the presence of PUSs and housing associations in British cities reflected a dual housing system that has hitherto been ignored by housing historians, the vanishingly small number of working class dwellings delivered by this sector in Newcastle reflect the power of the Council to marginalise, if not wholly exclude, potential partners. In conclusion the Council chose to retain a singularly strong centre of control over the city's social housing developments, and it is this key role of the Council that plays a central concern in the thesis – only with the changes in national housing policy in the 1970s will the issue of complimentary housing providers reappear, see chapter 5.

Comparative implications

From their various origins the most obvious difference between social housing provision in Århus and Newcastle was the insertion of an effective housing association system as

mediator between state and council, and local residents in the Danish system. The absence of such a body in the English city played its part in leading Newcastle's housing management down a different route. Local government policy diverged, partly through the Danish social democratic commitment to co-operative organisations and working class associational life, and partly through the decision in Newcastle to provide social housing through a strong, centralised Housing Committee.

The legacy from the nineteenth century on the two cities' industrial developments played a role in the choices city leaders made for social housing provision. Both Newcastle's and Århus' historically significant trade ports came to stand as an important comparative equivalence according to local civic representatives.¹⁴⁸ But whereas the port in Århus adjusted to the import needs of the Jutish agricultural sector and saw a significant presence of diverse smaller trades and industries in the city, the port of Newcastle relied to a large extent on export trades in coal mining and engineering that were vulnerable in the face of international competition and fluctuations in demand.¹⁴⁹ An important difference was the high level of employment in the shipbuilding and heavy engineering sectors on the banks of the river Tyne, sectors almost wholly absent in Århus. What this meant in terms of the provision of social housing for the local working classes was found in the different types of organisation that social housing was to undergo in the two cities.

Newcastle had industrialised to a much greater degree than Århus during the nineteenth century, and subsequently saw a serious contraction of its industries, at a time when Århus' industrial base was expanding. The population in Newcastle had grown to such an extent that the working class and the poor lived in squalid and insanitary conditions for a large part of the century before national legislation compelled the Council to take action. The working class in Newcastle had spent several generations in the city in contrast to the young agricultural labourers who were moving to Århus to seek their fortune around the start of the twentieth century. Although the population was growing in Århus, it did not see similar slum conditions as Newcastle saw by the 1930s, despite both cities experiencing high levels of overcrowding.

Both municipalities had in the nineteenth century been guided by liberal principles from within the civic leadership. Working class housing was therefore dominantly provided by

private landlords who had relatively free reign to build, but following byelaw directives that in Århus were provided occasional dispensation. Both cities also experienced a territorial division of classes across the cities. Working class housing was generally placed near sites of work. In both cities this meant building flats close to the harbours and factories placed near key route of communication. In Århus there were signs of additional models of private renting based on a landlord sharing their dwelling with a tenant, and a socially mixed tenancy base in inner city blocks of flats. The middle class in both cities moved away from the city centres to cleaner and more picturesque areas that in Århus compelled the Council to consider ways to create working relationships with its surrounding suburban parish councils well into the twentieth century.

The establishment of housing authorities in Århus and Newcastle had implications for their constitution. National political culture affected the structures of provision, which in turn absorbed and embedded this culture in their administrative workings. The differences in the cultural background of the working class populations were going to imprint itself on the activities of the Labour Movement. Hence the three arms of Danish social democracy, labour and the co-operatives would provide the foundation for the political culture of the early social housing movement in Århus. In Newcastle on the other hand, having seen major interventions by the Council in establishing the urban infrastructure before 1914, the working class and its political representatives consolidated their demands for adequate housing to be provided by the local authority. Until 1914 resourceful groups of the working classes in both cities had taken it upon themselves to build housing for homeownership. Although self-help in the form of workers' building societies in Århus or co-operative housing projects in Newcastle signalled an effort to supplement housing provided by the market, such projects were small and only supported the wealthier, respectable working class. Unlike the later developments in Århus Newcastle's working class co-operation did not establish independent housing co-operatives based on shared property development, as it focused on consumer co-operation and retail. When they did concern themselves with housing this aimed at private ownership for the 'aristocrats of labour,' not the non-profit making social housing associations later found in Århus.

With the crisis of war the stresses of the housing problems in the cities increased. Despite Denmark's neutrality during the First World War its building trades were unable to cope with the rising costs of materials. In Britain sporadic unrest warned of the potential of political radicalism, and national housing legislation in part sought to provide homecoming service men with a higher quality of housing than they had previously only dreamt of. Although Århus and Newcastle had sought to contain the housing problem through residual projects it was clear that a more general housing provision was needed. Pre-war housing strategies were consolidated and achieved greater focus in the post-war period. In Newcastle the expectations from national government, local politicians and the working classes were on the local authority to implement a systematic and comprehensive housing strategy. In Århus municipal socialism slowly shaped its social welfare provisions to incorporate housing associations, inspired by developments in Copenhagen, as executive partners in its social housing sector.

Early on housing associations were represented as a grass roots housing movement, dressed in a Danish consumer co-operative form that had been processed through the Labour Movement, adopting the political culture of collaboration and compromise typical from the end of the nineteenth century. From the outset the Århusian social housing associations emphasised their democratic and egalitarian principles. They perceived themselves as autonomous self-help organisations that in friendly working relations with the city's Council would provide a quality co-operative housing system as an alternative to speculative housing. But maybe this was less an alternative than a complementary housing form to the capitalist housing system that was ultimately accepted by the Danish political system even in its social democratic form. Private housing continued to dominate the Århusian landscape, even more so in the suburbs, where small fledgling housing associations also arose, albeit nurtured by the advantageous state loans only available by the end of the 1930s.

Rather than embrace the co-operative and later non-profit making model of social housing, which Århusian social democrats came to accept as a workable alternative to its municipally funded housing projects, Newcastle Labour representatives rejected this possible alternative. According to Natasha Vall:

The local Labour Party's early appropriation of housing as both a political concern and means for defending the interests of the working classes, ensured that the provision of 'social' housing in the city, also became associated with the 'defensive' Labourist stance, which characterised both the national and local parties' early development.¹⁵⁰

Where Århusian municipal socialism was strong, consensual and proactive it would appear that Newcastle's working class politics were vulnerable and subject to the vagaries of liberal forces in the Council well into the twentieth century. Yet, despite initial reluctance from within Newcastle Council pressure from the Labour Party saw its role on the Housing Committee expand.

Newcastle's council housing system was a similar complement to a broader speculative housing system. The scale of the housing need and the quantities of social housing provided here was much greater than in Århus. The local authority was unable to meet housing demand for most of the period before 1945, but it had no intention of sharing its responsibilities with any major partners, other than the private sector, which in all likelihood affected political decision-making during the period. Thus, where Århusian social housing providers were comparatively small and had institutionalised a direct democratic system that devolved aspects of housing management to small, local units, Newcastle's Committee driven social housing providers kept its housing management and construction close to the centre. This would at times make communication between Committees laborious, especially as housing policies became affected by party political debates. In Newcastle the overriding concern for housing providers was the historical problem of overcrowding, due in part to the inheritance of the Tyneside flat.

The crucial factor that directed the way the divergence between the two cities was to be shaped was the lack of support for housing associations nationally and locally in Britain. Housing historians generally agree that the British local authority led housing strategy moved the country's housing system down a unique track and this is certainly confirmed by the study of Århus' and Newcastle's social housing options. What seems clear is the extent to which the public policies in Denmark endorsed the direct democratic principles of housing associations, which took democratic impulses to a broad constituency and increasingly became available as an option for poorer households. By denying its support for a complimentary, non-commercial housing sector Newcastle's Housing Committee

clearly signalled its intention to retain its powers, even when it was clear that its provision continued to be inadequate. The Committee may have underpinned its decisions with the argument that it was accountable to Newcastle's citizens and ratepayers, but in the process it excluded the possibilities of devolving its responsibilities. The political culture of strong Council decision making in Britain was thus perpetuated and reinforced in the Housing Committee's commitment to centralisation.

The present chapter has outlined significant issues that led Århus and Newcastle to adopt different housing systems in the twentieth century. Each city took a different direction that was to have repercussions well into the post-war period. Their chosen trajectory led them to a particular path of provision. Each choice was to compel particular management structures and divisions of labour within these structures. It is the contention of the thesis that the different directions each city's housing system presents reflected continuities into the post-war period that bore the imprint of cultural differences in the cities' housing management and meaning. The issue of organising and administering the systems is important for understanding the meanings that the systems were to evoke as the century progressed. Whether from inside the housing authorities themselves, from the relationships they built with partners such as architects, or from their relationship to their clients, Århus' and Newcastle's social housing providers became important agents in the twentieth century biographies of the two cities. Having outlined the fundamental differences in the two systems, the structural divergence at the local level was clear. It was from the structures of housing authorities that lines of communication ran, and the following chapters will consider aspects of representing the social relationships and meanings within social housing in the two cities.

¹ C. Pooley (ed.) mentions Germany and the Netherlands as examples, see his *Housing Strategies in Europe 1880-1930*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992, p.331

² Jens Engberg, Byen under forvandling, in Helge Paludan et al, *op. cit.*, p. 152-153

³ J. Fink, Byens rum, in Ib Gejl (ed.), *Århus. Byens historie*, vol. 3, 1870-1945, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1998, p.9-10. The harbour became a key trading link for the agricultural sector although Esbjerg on the west coast was the dominant port for the agricultural trade in Denmark, see the table p.235-236 in Jens Christensen, En storby i provinsen, in Helge Paludan et al, *Århus bys historie fra vikingetid til nutid*, Århus: Husets Forlag, 1998.

⁴ J. Fink, *ibid.* p. 9-10, S. Kolstrup, *Velfærdsstatens rødder. Fra kommunesocialisme til folkepension*, Copenhagen, Selskabet til Forskning i Arbejdervælgelsen Historie, 1998, p.141

⁵ K.-G. Hildebrand, Scandinavia, in P. Mathias and M.M. Postan, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe Vol. vii*, part I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, p.602

⁶ Engberg *op. cit.*, percentages calculated from figures given p.168-169

⁷ Historisk Værksted, *Kend din by din rod!* Århus: Modtryk, 1983, p.14; Engberg *op. cit.*, p.168; Bodil Olesen, *Et kvarter og dets mennesker. Bolig- og livsformer gennem 100 år. Frederiksbjerg Øst, Århus*, Århus: Købstadsmuseet 'Den gamle By', 1985, p.40

⁸ Jens Engberg, *op. cit.*, p.142

⁹ Regnar Knudsen, *Vejby-Risskov gennem tiderne*, Vejby-Risskov: Vejby-Risskov Kommune, 1955, p.322-341

¹⁰ The first Danish Town Planning Act appeared in 1925, but does not appear to have had any significant effect on urban development in or around Århus. A. Gaardmand, *Dansk byplanlægning 1938-1992*, Copenhagen: Arkitektens Forlag, 1993, p.20; Århus concentrated its town planning around inner city road developments during the interwar period, Bo Larsson and Ole Thomassen, *Urban Planning in Denmark*, in Thomas Hall, *Planning and Urban Growth in the Nordic Countries*, London: E & FN Spon, 1991, p. 27

¹¹ For a description of the urbanisation process in Denmark see Ole Hyldtoft, Urbaniseringen i Danmark 1914-1970, *Historika IV*, 1981, p.176-194, in the case of interwar urbanisation of smaller towns esp. p.180-181

¹² Århus Kommunes Statistiske Kontor, *Statistisk Aarbog for Århus*, Århus: Århus Kommune, 1946, p.3

¹³ Ole Hyldtoft, Denmark, in C. Pooley (ed.), *Housing Strategies in Europe 1880-1930*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992, p.51

¹⁴ Rita Sørensen, Fra landlig idyl til arbejderkvarter - et eksempel på hvordan industrialiseringen forvandlede et lokalområde, in *Årbog for arbejderbevægelsens historie, Tema Arbejderen og boligen*, 1984 (4), p.45-46; Engberg, *op. cit.*, p.185-187.

¹⁵ Fink, *op. cit.* p.19-30

¹⁶ Rita Sørensen, *op. cit.*, p.42-45

¹⁷ Rita Sørensen, *op. cit.*, p.36-38

¹⁸ Kjeld Elkjær, De høje huse, in Vagn Dybdahl, *Hus og hjem i Århus*, Århus: Århus Byhistoriskudvalg, 1977, p.30-31; Hyldtoft, *op. cit.*, p. 48-49.

¹⁹ Århus Kommunes Statistiske Kontor, *Økonomiske og Statistiske Meddelelser 1944: Boligbyggeriet i Århus Kommune 1805-1944*, Århus: Århus Kommune, 1945, p.17

²⁰ *ibid.*, table 10., p.18

²¹ Svend Aage Andersen, Victorianisme, småborgerlighed og arbejderkultur, *Årbog for arbejderbevægelsens historie, Tema: Arbejderen og boligen*, 1984, (4), p.64-65; examples are illustrated in *Arkitekten, Maanedshæfte*, xxix, 1927, p. 262. On the Copenhagen tenements see Ole Hyldtoft (1992), *op. cit.*, p. 48-51

²² Kjeld Elkjær, *op. cit.*, p.30. For a fictionalized autobiographical account see Soya, *Min farmors hus*, Cph.: Forlaget Union, 1943, which describes life in a Danish Victorian landlady's household, with evocative descriptions of the relationship between the landlady and her tenants.

²³ Bodil Olesen, *op. cit.*, p.24-25

²⁴ Hyldtoft, *ibid.*

- ²⁵ Commonly the earliest examples of high quality workers' housing in Danish housing historiography are the sanitary efforts made by doctors and workers in Copenhagen. O. Hyldtoft (1992) op. cit., p.45-46, Olaf Lind and Jonas Møller, *FolkeBolig, BoligFolk. Politik og praksis i boligbevægelsens historie*, Cph.: Boligselskabernes Landsforening, 1994, p.28-32
- ²⁶ O. Hyldtoft (1992), op. cit., p. 44-45; on the poor house in Århus see Engberg, op. cit., p. 187-190; early Danish welfare provisions were based on the notion of the deserving and undeserving poor, but were to gradually feed out of the language as the national welfare state integrated its social welfare policies, see Bent Greve (Roskilde Universitetscenter), *The Danish Welfare State: the Legislative Framework and Future Prospects*, paper published on the Internet: http://www.stm.unipi.it/Clio/tabs/libri/4/04-Greve_41-58.pdf, p. 43 (accessed 10.10.2005); Niels Finn Christiansen and Klaus Petersen, *The Dynamics of Social Solidarity: The Danish Welfare State, 1900-2000*, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 2001, 26, (3), p.179
- ²⁷ S. Kolstrup op. cit., p.163
- ²⁸ P. Holm, *Arbejdernes Byggeforening i Århus gennem 50 Aar 1872-1922*, Århus: Århus Amtstidendes Bogtrykkeri, 1922
- ²⁹ S. Kolstrup, op. cit., p.144, Fode, Henrik, Byens styre, in Gejl, Ib (ed.), *Århus. Byens historie, 1870-1945*, vol. 3, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1998, p.315, 329
- ³⁰ Klaus Petersen and N.F. Christiansen, Velfærd med vilje - men hvis?, in Niels Plough, Ingrid Hendriksen and Niels Kærdgård (eds.), *Den danske velfærdstats historie, Antologi*, Cph.: Socialforskningsinstituttet, 2004, p.142-151
- ³¹ For an outline of the red-green alliance model see, Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Politics against Markets*, Princeton University Press, 1985. Peter Baldwin sees this alliance arising not just based on a solidaristic social democratic welfare model, but considers the benefits for the liberal midling social groups through pension rights developments at the end of the 19th century. Peter Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity, Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.65-76
- ³² Tim Knudsen, *Rethinking the Origin of the Scandinavian Welfare State*, working paper, Cph.: Institut for Statskundskab, 1995, Niels Ole Finneman concludes that the 19th century Grundtvigian ideas continued as a 20th century *Weltanschauung*, see his *I Broderskabets Ånd. Den Socialdemokratiske arbejderbevægelses idehistorie, 1871-1977*, Cph., Gyldendal, 1985
- ³³ Klaus Petersen's thesis is a closely detailed study of the post-war political debates within the political parties on the development of the Danish welfare state - see his *Legitimität und Krise. Die Geschichte des Dänischen Wohlfahrtsstaates 1945-1973*, Berlin: Verlag Arno Spitz, 1998
- ³⁴ S. Kolstrup op. cit., p.144; Ib Gejl (ed.), *Parti og by. Socialdemokratiet i Århus 1883-1983*, Århus: Social Demokratiet, 1983, p.33-39
- ³⁵ Ib Gejl, Uden hus og hjem, in V. Dybdahl, *Hus og hjem i Århus 1890-1940*, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1977, p.68
- ³⁶ S. Kolstrup, op. cit., p.164
- ³⁷ Gejl (1977), op. cit., p.80
- ³⁸ *Architekten, Maanedshæfte*, xxix, 1927, p.264
- ³⁹ S. Kolstrup, op. cit., p.161-165
- ⁴⁰ S. Kolstrup, op. cit. p.168-169
- ⁴¹ I. Gejl, op. cit., p.76-77
- ⁴² Nye Bygninger i Århus, *Architekten, Maanedshæfte*, 1927, xxix, p.263
- ⁴³ Gejl, op. cit., p.80
- ⁴⁴ Århus Kommunes Statistiske Kontor (1945) op. cit., figures calculated from table 13, p.21, p.23
- ⁴⁵ op. cit., p.10
- ⁴⁶ An overview history of Danish state loans for the interwar urban housing period see Indenrigsministeriets Byggeudvalg af 1940, *Det fremtidige boligbyggeri*, Cph.: Indenrigsministeriet, 1945, p.113
- ⁴⁷ Housing associations were endorsed by state bodies and were subject to close public scrutiny; see below.
- ⁴⁸ Ole Hyldtoft (1992), op. cit., p. 61-62; M. Harloe et. al. (1995), p.127-128. Social housing associations were increasingly subject to state regulation. In order to achieve the generous state

loans available during the 1930s for example, conditions were placed on the associations that conferred growing control from the state and local authority. By the middle of the century the local rules and associational policies had been standardised by the Ministry for Housing with only minor, local variations specifying the various associations.

⁴⁹ AAB, *Vi bygger selv*, Århus: AAB, 1944, n.p.

⁵⁰ Århus Kommunes Statistiske Kontor, op. cit., p.14

⁵¹ Befolkingskommissionen, *Betænkning nr. 2, Laan til Boligbyggeri og Huslejeftdrag for Mindrebemidlede, Børnerige Familier*, Cph.: Befolkingskommissionen, 1937

⁵² Indenrigsministeriets Byggeudvalg, op. cit., p.125

⁵³ AAB (1944)

⁵⁴ AAB, 1919-1929, Århus: AAB, 1929; AAB (1944) op. cit., n.p., Ole Hyldtoft (1992), op. cit., p. 58-60

⁵⁵ Malernes Co-operative Forretning, *Malernes Co-operative Forretning Århus. 50 år i et penselstrøg*, Århus, 1971, *Hustømrenes Aktieselskab 1919-1969* Århus: 1969; Jord & Beton, *Jord & Beton 1932-82*, Århus, 1982, Murernes co-operative Forretning, *Murernes co-operative Forretning Århus. 25 år. 1920- 26. oktober – 1945*, Århus: 1945.

The figure of Jens Perregård (1880-1953) shows the close link between the social housing association movement in Århus and social democratic politics. He was a Social democratic member of the city Council from 1924 to 1931, when he was expelled due to negative pronouncements against the city's homeless and general unpopularity within the party. Bue Beck et al., *Århus. Byens borgere 1165-2000*, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 2000, p.260. For a history of Århus town hall see Henrik Fode, *Byens hus*, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1991

⁵⁶ Murernes co-operative Forretning, op cit., p.12-13

⁵⁷ N. F. Christiansen, Between Farmers and Workers: Consumer Cooperation in Denmark, 1850-1940, E. Furlough, C. Stikwerda (eds.), *Consumers against Capitalism? Consumer Cooperation in Europe, North America and Japan, 1840-1990*, Maryland: Rouman & Littlefield Publ. Inc., 1999, p.236

⁵⁸ Michael Harloe, op. cit., p. 131

⁵⁹ AAB *Vedtægter* (Housing Association Regulations) 1939, with very little variation of the main aims from the 1925 Regulations.

Transl. from:

Foreningens formål er en reform af boligforholdene. Dette søges opnået ved at overføre andelsprincippet på boligproduktionen, så andelhaverne ved at blive medejere af deres Boliger.....

Foreningen søger at skabe gode og samfundsmæssige boligforhold ved at opføre såvel etagebygninger som haveboliger for arbejdere og økonomisk ligestillede til den lavest mulige pris, så boligafgiften kun er et udtryk for det til enhver tid nødvendige beløb til forrentning og afdrag af lånene....

⁶⁰ Indeed the Rochdale principles were cited as directly applicable to the Danish co-operative movement's ideals, Henning Ravnholt, *Den Danske Andelsbevægelse*, Cph.: Det Danske Selskab, 1943, p. 22

⁶¹ P. Christensen and Fr. Dalgaard, *Kooperation. Arbejder-kooperationens Udvikling, Program og Problemer*, Cph.: Forlaget Fremad, 1936, p.57-60, 95

⁶² Fr. Dalgaard, Byernes Kooperation, in A. Axelsen Drejer (ed.), *Den Danske Andelsbevægelse*, Cph.: Nyt Socialt Bibliotek, Martins Forlag, 1943, p.313

Transl. from: Den moderne Boligkooperation er af udpræget social karakter. Dens særkende er, at de af den opførte Boliger vedbliver at være fælleseje, saaledes at de ikke kan gribes af Privatspekulationen til Skade for Prisniveauet for Boliger.

⁶³ Boligforeningen Ringgaarden (est. 1938), *Forhandlingsprotokol* (Minute Book), 07.08.38

⁶⁴ AAB, *Marselisgaarden*, advertising leaflet, 1938

⁶⁵ AAB (1944) n.p.

⁶⁶ The association became 'almennyttig'; AAB, Erik Piilgaard (ed.), *Jubilæumsskrift, 75 års jubilæum 1919-1994*, Århus: AAB, 1994, n.p.

- ⁶⁷ Indenrigsministeriets Udvalg, op. cit., 118-121
- ⁶⁸ Lind and Møller (1994), op. cit. p.91-92, (described by Kolstrup as a 'cynical compromise of temporary nature') Kolstrup, op. cit. p.324-335, Klaus Petersen on the other hand argues that four important welfare acts arose here: public social welfare provision; the 'people's insurance' (covering childcare, elderly, disability and sickness provisions); unemployment insurance and accident at work insurance provisions, see his *Legitimität und Krise. Die Geschichte des Dänischen Wohlfahrtsstaates 1945-1973*, Berlin: Verlag Arno Spitz, 1998, p. 29
- ⁶⁹ AAB, *Housing Association Rule Books*, 1921, 1939; AAB (1944) op. cit., n.p.
- ⁷⁰ Ringgården, *Ringgården – en almennyttig boligforening 1938-50-1988*, (anniversary booklet), Århus: Ringgården, 1988, p. 9
- ⁷¹ This was suggested by Århus Council, Århus Kommunes Statistiske Kontor (1945), op. cit., p.35
- ⁷² *ibid.*
- ⁷³ AAB (1929), (1944), op. cit., n.p.
- ⁷⁴ This topic will be discussed later in chapter 3. For now it is worth noting that the tradition of anniversary publications is a key feature of most Danish housing association, and reiterates the hegemony of associational life that is assumed to be at the core of Danish culture more generally. An anthropological study of Danish enlightenment culture is provided in Steven M. Borish, *The Land of the Living: The Danish Folk High Schools and Denmark's non-Violent Path to Modernization*, Nevada City: Blue Dolphin Publishing Incorp., 1991
- ⁷⁵ AAB 1919-1929, Århus: AAB, 1929, p. 11
- ⁷⁶ Knud Bidstrup, *Ebenerzers disciple. Fra dansk byplanlægnings pionertid*, Cph.: Dansk Byplanlaboratorium, 1971, p.23
- ⁷⁷ Transl. from 'Monumenter for Samdrægtighedens Aand,' AAB 1919-1929, op. cit., p. 6.
- ⁷⁸ AAB (1944) op. cit., n.p. The notion of *hygge* has been described as key to Danish culture and sociability, S. Borish, op. cit., p.164
- ⁷⁹ Boligforeningen Ringgården, *Forhandlingsprotokol* (Minute Book), 23.08.38
- ⁸⁰ Michael Barke and Maureen Callcot, Municipal Intervention in Housing: constraints and Developments in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1835-1914, in Lancaster ed., *Working Class Housing on Tyneside 1850-1939*, Berwick: Berwick Press, 1994, p.9, Michael Barke, Newcastle/Tyneside 1890-1980, in G. Gordon, *Regional Cities in the UK 1890-1980*, London: Sage Pubs., 1986; H. Mess, *Industrial Tyneside, A Social Survey*, London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1928
- ⁸¹ For a history of the links between Newcastle's banking, insurance and other entrepreneurial developments and the regional industries see Oliver Lendrum, An Integrated Elite, Newcastle's Economic Development 1840-1914, in W. Lancaster and R. Colls, *Newcastle upon Tyne. A Modern History*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co Ltd., 2001
- ⁸² N. McCord, *North East England. The Region's History 1750-1960*, London: Batsford Academic, 1979, ch.5 *passim*. Natasha Vall, *Explorations in Comparative History*, unpublished PhD, Newcastle: University of Northumbria, 2000. Vall's second chapter deals with a comparison of the economic structure in Newcastle and the Swedish city Malmö. The sections on Newcastle's industries illustrate the lack of investment in diversification of local industries. p.54. For a detailed consideration of Newcastle's industrial heritage in the twentieth century see N. Vall, The Emergence of the Post-Industrial Economy in Newcastle 1914-2000, in Lancaster, W. and Colls, R., *Newcastle upon Tyne. A Modern History*, Chichester, Phillimore & Co Ltd., 2001
- ⁸³ N. McCord, op. cit., p.218.
- ⁸⁴ N. Vall (2001), op. cit., 53
- ⁸⁵ M. Barke, op. cit., p. 117, see his map of industrial distribution, p.119. C.C. Taylor, Types of Housing Development: 1851-1901, in M. Barke and R.J. Buswell, *Newcastle's changing map*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle upon Tyne City Libraries & Arts, 1992, p.40
- ⁸⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol.I, London: Penguin, 1976, p.815-817
- ⁸⁷ M. Barke, *Social Change in Benwell*, Newcastle: Benwell Community Development Project, 1977, pp.9-11
- ⁸⁸ M. Daunton, *House and Home in the Victorian City*, London: Edward Arnold, 1983, p. 15-30
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

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- ¹³⁷ P. Malpass (1995), op. cit. p.7-9, *Sunday Sun* 29.03.36 and 10.05.36
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Chapter 3

Aspects of Social Housing Management: administration, organisation and town planning

Introduction

A key issue for this chapter to consider is the administration of social housing in Århus and Newcastle: during the immediate post-war period the two cities faced urgent housing problems shaped by local and national contingencies such as material shortages and homelessness. The specific concerns of the two local authorities varied however. On the one hand Århus experienced acute pressure for land and continuing demographic changes, on the other hand Newcastle needed to tackle the presence of redundant and unsanitary slums and overcrowding inherited from the pre-war period. Both cities revealed continuities in their management of social housing, yet Newcastle increasingly developed aspects of a professionalised housing management system, that did not seem to reach a similar level in Århus until later. This had implications for the microenvironment in which the welfare management of tenants' housing needs was approached. It was revealed at the point of contact between the public housing authorities in the case of Newcastle and the more domesticated environment of the housing area in Århus.

The chapter will consider how the post-war social housing systems within the cities were organised. New organisational strategies were instrumental in managing the cities' social housing and urban spaces. They were buoyed by the ideals of the modern architectural and planning fashions of their time. In order to locate the position of social housing within the greater debates about urban administration planning, the chapter will outline the continuities in housing administration and the challenges for renewal that appeared. The previous chapter showed how the origins of social housing provision shaped the management and organisation of local housing areas. Both cities continued to apply their respective housing systems in the post-war period, adjusted according to the needs for local urban renewal and social amelioration.

How specific tools and relationships were developed and problems arose within local debates will cast light on issues of concern for each city. The chapter will reveal differences in emphasis of the role of the local authority, the role of different types of social housing providers, the access to external sources of inspiration for the cities'

modernisation plans, and urban planning schemes. Both municipalities identified the spatial distribution of housing and places of work as vital problems. The chapter may tellingly explore the divergences in the uses each city made of planning models. It will to some extent explain their struggles to meet their respective needs for a workable physical environment that would provide the backdrop for a dynamic democratic urban society. Whether this was achieved may be gleaned from issues arising within the comparison.

Århus: The organisation of local authority housing and urban planning

During the Second World War few policies affected Danish housing explicitly, but a national advisory committee did investigate the state of Danish housing. Its conclusions were in some areas adopted for social housing strategies after the war. The Committee evaluated the various means of establishing an effective housing programme, concluding that housing associations presented the building blocks for future social housing development. Associations had the expertise and the infrastructure available to facilitate a more socially just housing system.¹ Their remit as providers of housing for poorer social groups in particular was consolidated. Regulated by state financed subsidies Danish housing associations became increasingly integrated into the social democratic post-war welfare programme, which stressed a planned Keynesian economy. The co-operative process was interpreted as an integral element to the wider regulation of state services.

The 1946 Housing Subsidies Act provided the foundation for post-war housing developments and Århus Council embraced the possibilities it provided. It accepted a workable municipal partnership with social housing associations as the key to the city's social housing provision. The national housing discourse may have instigated the modernisation of housing through construction technology and efficiency measures, but Danish provincial cities, such as Århus, at first sought to resolve the acute housing needs arising from wartime restrictions. The demands of the German occupation and its redeployment of materials resulted in local materials shortages. The rising costs of construction and the withdrawal of private sector housing development was furthermore leading to a slow start for housing provision in Århus. The the occupying forces had diverted materials for their own uses, and the problem of briefly housing Polish and German refugees from the Eastern Front in the immediate post-war period, had further limited access to emergency shelter in barracks available for homeless households.² Only

with later improvements of the economy could a more efficient organisation of the city's housing provision be established.

The housing problem was exacerbated on the official biannual moving day, when Århusian tenants were evicted, or could leave their tenancies.³ The number of homeless in the city rose from 120 families in 1942 to 233 families in 1945. Similarly to after the First World War emergency measures were put in place to provide shelter in barracks, school gyms and factory halls. Other households occupied allotment sheds and empty basements, sometimes in damp and inhospitable conditions.⁴ But such lodgings were only temporary. There was a demand for socially amenable housing that would fulfil the health and hygiene needs of modern family life. The local authority declared its commitment to house those in need, undertaking to work for housing equality: '.... the Council has a duty to provide the possibility of housing for those heads of families who are not responsible for their own homelessness.'⁵ Indeed the waves of wartime stress were a compelling factor in Århusian social housing provision for years to come, and the housing authorities were forced to consider their role as providers and administrators of a local social housing service.

The administrative practices of the local authority and housing associations developed in new ways after the war. Municipal management of Århus in peacetime was rationalised: areas such as the coordination of urban planning, education, health and the location of housing were modernised within the city's governmental system.⁶ The city's welfare services faced growth and expansion. Thus from 1950 the organisation of the authority became structured around a five-pronged executive, each responsible for a set of services - the second executive arm for example provided building, architectural and planning advice to the city's Council. The Mayor headed the executive with a salaried 'alderman' each leading an executive section. New committees were established to deal with the continuing, but more urgent issues of spatial and social planning. Both the new statistical department, established in 1945, and the Committee for the Expansion of the City were important for post-war housing and urban planning schemes, considered the city's relationship with the neighbouring local authorities. Moreover, the City Engineer and City Architect's offices monitored technical issues relating to housing and town planning. Loans, sales and property transactions by housing associations on the other hand required

further sanction by the local authority and the Ministry of the Interior, duties later transferred to the Ministry of Housing. The distribution of housing was a central area of concern for the new committees.

Transparency became an important way to facilitate and communicate the accountability of the city's leadership to the population. Annual Reports and City Handbooks were published, while the social constitution of the city and the continuing need for development of welfare provisions were treated in quarterly and annual statistical reports, covering the Greater Århus area. One of the first publications from the Statistics Department was a comparative report on the housing situation in the city and its relationship to suburban housing conditions.⁷ These detailed reports consistently revealed that differences were apparent between the city and its neighbours. They provided an invaluable planning tool in the city's arguments for the incorporation of the suburban councils with the city for the sake of an even development of housing areas as well as sites for education and employment.

These spatial differences will be discussed later in the chapter as they raise important question about the distribution of housing across the city region. The administrative task of facilitating urban growth and the process of modernising local government would be the foundation for a more efficient management of the city's development. Coupled with the expansion of the remit of social housing associations it contributed to the collaborative nature of Århus' social housing within the borders of the local authority.

The engagement by Mayors in Århus' housing issues

Moreover, the historical involvement of Århusian Social Democrats with co-operative organisations continued after the war. The city's Social Democratic Mayors actively worked with social housing associations from the 1940s to the 1970s. Although proactive and positive in their engagement with associational life, questions were raised about the potential partiality of these relationships.

Unmack Larsen (Mayor from 1945 to 1958),⁸ Bernhardt Jensen (Mayor, 1958-1971)⁹ and Orla Hyllested, (Mayor from 1971), embedded their civic leadership through significant municipal housing and planning responsibilities. They were personally involved with

various housing associations. Larsen chaired a housing association from 1942 to 1955 and was involved in monitoring the conditions and re-housing of homeless families. Bernhardt Jensen represented the Council on the committee of *Contact*, a partnership between five housing associations and Århus Council (set up in 1962) that implemented slum clearance programmes (see chapter 5).¹⁰ Both Larsen and Jensen were involved in planning committees for Greater Århus during the 1950s and 1960s, while Orla Hyllested was the Chairman and Business Manager of *Fagbo*, an Århusian housing association established by the skilled trades.¹¹ He also contributed to the committee work of *Arbejderbo*, the national technical advisory body for social housing associations that had been set up by various trades' associations and unions in 1941.¹² The dividing lines between municipal politics and the autonomy of social housing associations were therefore somewhat blurred, but fostered communication between associations in civil society and official political channels.

Nevertheless it seems that such connections were questioned. Ministerial activity occasionally intervened to ensure accountability and the maintenance of associational independence was upheld. In 1955 Århus Council was encouraged to make its involvement in social housing governance more transparent. The Ministry of Housing proposed to assign an independent Inspector to the Århusian housing system to prevent the possible overlap of interest between Council members and particular housing associations.¹³ The Mayor, resisting ministerial interference, considered the city's Inspector, fully adequate to the task. Nevertheless, while the local authority continued its self-monitoring function, the Ministerial Inspector ensured a degree of accountability by limiting any potential personal interests in the city's social housing provision. As a consequence, the Mayor withdrew as Chair of a social housing association in 1955, a dual role by then thought to be 'unfortunate.'¹⁴ There is no evidence that the ministerial Inspector affected the outcome of local housing association policy, as Århusian housing associations and local social democracy showed a high degree of consensus during the 1950s and early 1960s. Århusian housing provision continued a reformist housing welfare programme, rather than pursuing the radical socialisation of housing that some Danish observers believed was taking place in Britain.¹⁵ In its moderate form the Århusian social housing system seemingly continued along the trajectory of openness and democratic accountability.

Social housing solutions in Århus

Post-war crisis initially compelled Århus Council to expand the city's dwelling capacity with short-term ad hoc measures. The Danish Ministry of Housing enabled the local authority to facilitate social housing construction. It could provide small-scale projects during moments of crisis, but in practice the local authority concentrated on supporting social housing associations. Solutions such as using emergency barracks to resolve the immediate housing shortage remained for some time the dominant housing form for the very poorest, despite initial intentions that they should be only temporary.¹⁶

Yet other temporary solutions bore little fruit despite initial proposals and promotions. Proposing multiple-occupancy in their property might, it was suggested, help reduce the number of single people living alone in large houses.¹⁷ In addition, both private landlords and housing associations owning blocks of flats were encouraged to convert loft spaces by the promise of subsidies (Fig. 3.1).¹⁸ Ultimately, however, this option depended on the voluntary compliance of property owners, and their piecemeal nature resulted in few new dwelling spaces.

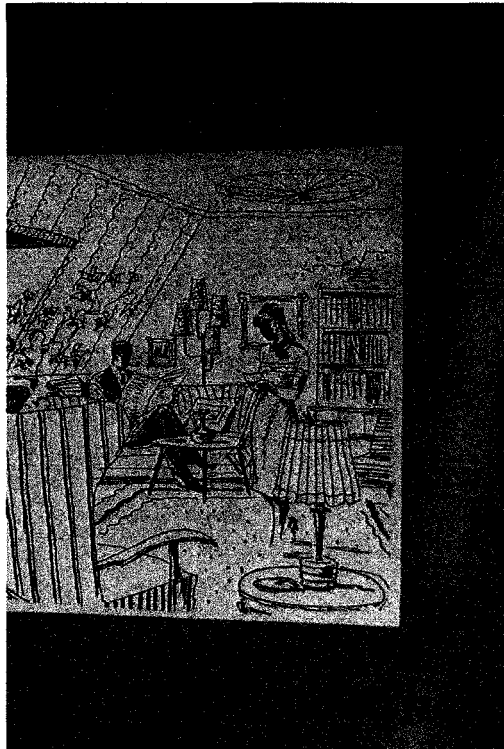


Fig. 3.1 'Convert a loft flat – a useful service to society.' Århus Council publication to encourage housing associations and private entrepreneurs to expand the city's housing numbers. Århus Council, *Indret en Taglejlighed – en nyttig Samfundsgerning*, Århus: Stadsarkitektens Kontor, 1946. Erhverbsarkivet, Unmack Larsen - Borgmesterens arkiv.

As a more lasting solution Århus Council facilitated a variety of temporary and permanent houses for families, whilst an opening in national housing policy seemed to promise a new means of collaborative housing provision.¹⁹ This latter solution was to exploit a rarely deployed economic-technical policy in the 1946 Housing Act. Social-philanthropic housing could be erected on condition that the Council found private philanthropic donations covering half of the amount provided by the Council itself. It would then be able to achieve both a state loan and a 10 % additional grant.²⁰ Together with two housing associations the Council constructed and managed the new housing type.²¹ Social philanthropic housing was built in areas previously occupied by barracks for the homeless, as well as placed prominently in areas earmarked for larger social housing projects. The houses were built as row or semi-detached houses, some constructed using non-traditional methods in socially mixed areas. They provided the inhabitants with the latest amenities, local shops and child care services.²² In this way

planning ideals of social mix were integrated with the organisation of social housing construction. The ultimate aim was to distribute poor families and prevent local concentration through a filtering-up mechanism:²³ it was hoped that social mix would benefit lower income families, as well as benefiting poorer families who moved into better-quality, vacated older housing stock.

Despite such philanthropic moves to involve private enterprise in social housing provision Århus' housing associations to some extent competed with the private construction sector. To support private sector homeownership Århus Council granted, and later (when the state loan system was wound up in 1958) guaranteed cheap loans towards private homeownership of small, detached houses for individual households. Private entrepreneurs and individual households constituted a growing market for private one-family houses. Through the 1946 Housing Subsidies Act they received up to 85% of building costs through state loans, supported by local authority guarantees.²⁴ There is little scope in this thesis to discuss the housing developments of private homeownership; suffice it to say that much suburban development, especially on the outskirts of Århus, was of this type, as we saw in the previous chapter. In the 1960s the competition with the private sector became increasingly explicit, and the next chapters will consider aspects of this in more detail.

Contesting the municipal housing project

Despite the state loans granted to the social and private sectors through the national Housing Subsidies Act of 1946, the city's housing problems had not been alleviated by the end of the decade. Albeit that state loans for the private housing sector seemed generous, the continuing materials shortages, the Danish fiscal crisis of 1947 and the limited land available in the city increased the competition for construction sites. Århus Council therefore undertook to build a block of flats along the city's new ring road. To some the municipal housing project seemed to signal the start of a potential expansion of the public housing sector.

At a time when competition for resources was strong, a short-lived struggle between private interests and public welfare concerns arose that illustrates the problem the Council faced during acute housing conditions. But it perhaps also suggests the significance of

turning to housing associations as the final solution for social housing. Although never a serious provider in the long term, the Council's own housing projects became the locus around revealing social tensions that lay dormant amongst influential building interests. Even a small-scale Council funded housing project was harshly criticised during the period of austerity - the block of flats built on a prime site detonated a symbolically loaded debacle.²⁵ The flats were built to high specifications in the style of housing association buildings for large, poorer families and the homeless, rather than the conventional temporary municipal shelter forms. In response to the flats a controversial letter, signed by various private building interests, was presented at a Council meeting in 1948. It voiced strong scepticism regarding the flats.²⁶ The letter asserted that private entrepreneurs and social housing associations were fully capable of providing dwellings – indeed the contemporary post-war housing crisis was very different from that at the end of World War I, when the Council had needed to intervene.²⁷ Social difference would be maintained in clear demarcations between types of providers.

It appeared as if the Council was fully capable of building quality housing. It might therefore become a competitive rival for the rare patches of land still remaining in the city. But rather than state the issue in terms of rivalry, the continuing need to accommodate 'anti-social' people by the Council was identified, perhaps referring to the stigmatised social groups living in temporary barracks. The alderman and future Mayor, Bernhardt Jensen, defended the decision to build local authority housing in the short term and highlighted the social prejudice laden in the letter. It was now thought more appropriate to build permanent housing, rather than the temporary barracks provided immediately after the Second World War.²⁸ It had never been the Council's intention to take over social housing provision, as it did not have the administrative experience to run large scale social housing efficiently.²⁹ Once the block was erected its management would be handed over to a housing association following inter-war practice.³⁰ The role of Århusian housing associations was clear: they would provide social housing, with the proviso that Århus Council was enabled to make a number of housing allocations or arrange alternative housing provision for the homeless.

In the final count such challenges had little impact and quickly faded as the economy improved. What is significant about such outbursts, is the presence of latent ideological

tensions that displayed an ordering of housing into a status hierarchy, placing social housing associations as providers for residual social groups – a notion that was unacceptable to social democratic egalitarian values and ideals of democratic accountability. Housing associations organised according to principles of self-rule and institutionalised democracy spoke more directly to the self-identity of the dominant Danish political culture of the time.

Considerations of the co-operative principle

Danish social housing can be considered in the light of co-operative ideals that seemed to promise a continuing thread to the Danish democratic project in the immediate post-war period. A leading post-war Social Democratic thinker declared his commitment to co-operative principles as the continuing third element of the Danish democratic way, but consumer co-operatives would be monitored by the state to enable a planned economy.³¹ By bolstering consumer co-operation the benefits of large investment, both through horizontal and vertical integration would become apparent.³²

The national social housing project embodied these principles. In 1947 the new Ministry of Housing and the national Construction Research Institute, whose purpose was to investigate rational construction methods for the use in housing design, were established.³³ In addition the Housing Subsidies Act of 1946 employed public funding to regulate the economy - while housing construction was rationalised, partly by promoting standardised building methods. The liberal parties (Venstre and the Conservative People's Party) preferred to reduce subsidies to a residual function in relation to market-led growth, while a negotiated social democratic consensus dominated the first decades after the war. It was this consensual approach that became apparent in the strategies adopted in Århus.³⁴ With the publication of 'Denmark of the Future' (*Fremtidens Danmark*), the Social Democratic manifesto of 1945, Keynesian demand management principles were adopted (Fig. 3.2). But where pre-war social democratic ideas had defined social equality as based on human rights, this was now reformulated as an equality of opportunity for all. Planning, technical and industrial efficiency would be the route into ameliorating the social realm.³⁵ Rationalised deployment of technology was to become the key to social progress for governmental bureaucracies, providing a greater role for professional experts including architects and town planners.³⁶ The housing movement increasingly absorbed

the notions of efficiency in their housing developments, and it can be suggested that tensions between rationalising tendencies and the democratic impulse arose during the decades after the war.

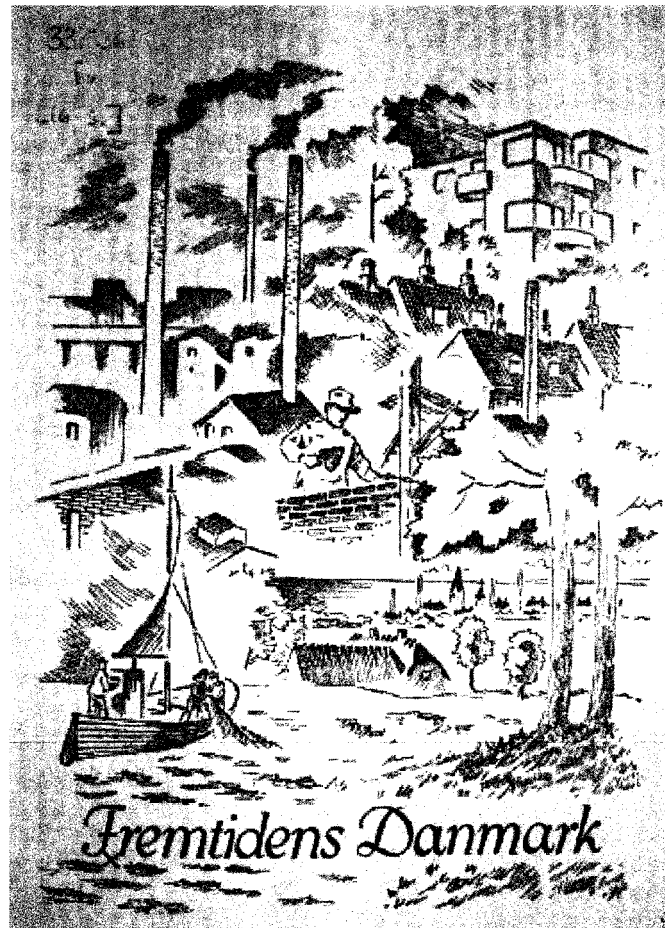


Fig. 3.2 Frontispiece to the abbreviated version of the Social Democratic post-war manifesto, *Fremtidens Danmark*. Socialdemokratiet, *Fremtidens Danmark*, Cph.: Socialdemokratiet, 1945

Post-war housing associations: principles and administration

New social housing associations were planned to be at the core of a future vision of the emergent Danish housing welfare.³⁷ Certainly the administrative acceptance of efficiency measures to provide quality social housing was vital in legitimising social housing associations (see chapter 4 and 5). The Århusian social housing authority became a bipartite formation, supervised by the stronger player, the municipality. Since the local

authority collaborated with, but ultimately monitored housing association activity, it held the overarching power to delegate housing responsibilities in the city. It inspected housing hygiene, regulated new housing construction and oversaw the physical quality of dwellings.³⁸

Housing associations were subsequently ideally placed to take over the social housing responsibilities of the city and were set to grow. Supported by generous state loans of up to 97 % of construction costs, new non-profit associations were established throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. During the War three social housing associations were listed in central Århus.³⁹ By 1960 the Council registered eight housing associations, with another ten overseen by the suburban local authorities.⁴⁰ But during the 1950s additional housing associations were nevertheless turned down, as the Ministry of Housing managed the balance of different types of association.⁴¹ This may be a sign that a consolidation of associations would encourage internal growth rather than a thinning of resource. Housing associations were set to expand their projects, taking on additional bureaucratic responsibilities to the potential detriment of their democratic potential.

Continuing democratic opportunities?

Variations on what was later established as a statutory residents' democratic principle (*boligdemokrati*- see chapter 5) in Danish housing legislation from 1970 was already in place in some form in social housing associations during the 1950s.⁴² The principle of co-operation inherently provided for a small-scale, local democratic mechanism. In Århus, the management of social housing areas was embedded within the housing locality, within relatively small quantities of housing stock - AAB, the largest social housing association in Århus for example managed more than 2,500 dwellings in 1956, housing around 10,000 residents.⁴³ In addition each housing association broke down the scale of management further. Each association divided its housing stock into local departments or sections of varying sizes, sometimes as small as a single block of flats.⁴⁴

The first active engagement for residents with the housing association was the membership subscription and a place on the housing association waiting list.⁴⁵ The housing association Committee instigated new housing projects, managed budgets and collaborated with architects and the municipality. It consisted of dominantly men from a

variety of backgrounds. Working class members mostly ran some associations founded in the co-operative tradition, whereas others (non-profit making, self-governing housing companies) were rooted in the Århusian establishment. *Det Sociale Boligbyggeri*, Århus' third housing association for example had been set up to provide housing for the poorest groups in Århus, by a group of privileged citizens including a company Director, a Lawyer and a Consul in addition to Unmack Larsen, who prior to becoming Mayor of Århus practiced as a Judge in the civil courts.⁴⁶ As associations gained responsibility for greater numbers of dwellings, they appointed office staff and a Business Manager as an executive administrator (Fig. 3.3).



Fig. 3.3 The administrative office of AAB in 1943-44. Prospective residents could come to the office to examine lay-outs and plans of future housing projects projected by the housing association. Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening, *Vi bygger selv*, Århus: AAB, 1944

In 1944 AAB for example had a representatives' committee of residents (*Representantskab*), made up of one representative for every 20 residents. This committee was the highest authority within the association, whilst each housing section (which consisted of anything from a single block of flats to several blocks in an housing area) controlled the local needs of their housing stock. Responsibilities included monitoring the state of repair, residents' complaints, levels of hygiene and regulations of children's play

in the area. Later, national housing association policy changed to allow full responsibility for budgets to be passed on to individual housing sections (considered in chapter 5).

In this way the institutional foundations of Danish housing associations provided the opportunity for residents to participate actively in the management of their housing areas. However it would be wrong to suppose that the majority necessarily engaged in this aspect of associational life. The NFDHA noted in 1966, that despite the 1958 Tenancy Act, which gave increased powers to residents' representative committees, the level of influence held by residents on social housing administration was minimal.⁴⁷ Indeed gender also seemed an inhibiting factor of local democratic participation: Many committees consisted mostly of men, with very little representation of women. In 1969, as women's liberation in Denmark was becoming a vocal political force, Århus AAB noted that individual household votes were rarely controlled by women, and it seldom occurred that a woman was voted onto the representatives' committee.⁴⁸

The supreme authority of social (or non-profit making) housing associations was the annual meeting of the general assembly, at which each member-household held a vote. Yet despite this potential opening towards influence residents were more concerned about their private affairs and were less concerned with these official governmental processes.⁴⁹ In some instances the local residents' associations that formed inside social housing associations instead attempted to represent important issues to the main housing association Committee. Yet their main influence was typically dealing with localised issues relating to the everyday use of the flats. Problems of collective laundry drying facilities, bicycle parking, noise and vandalism caused by children, were among the main concerns. Other, more important issues such as influencing the appointment of local janitors (*varmemestre*) and having a say about the house rules needed persistent requests to the main social housing committee.⁵⁰

Although residents were seemingly given managerial powers, their agency in actively intervening or proposing changes was inhibited. It may have been for this reason that the housing association Boligforeningen Vesterbo's main committee decided to change its policy to encourage local self-management of its housing sections. In 1964, at a general meeting to discuss policy change, only 125 members (including spouses) of a possible

2,700 attended - and only 9 % of those present were eligible to vote.⁵¹ From its inception Vesterbo had attempted to engage residents' sense of responsibility to their own area. It strongly advocated a sense of ownership in its residents, less to politicise them party politically than to continue the spirit of co-operation and participation in which the association had first set out.⁵²

Other forms of representation and advocacy of tenants' rights existed more generally. By the interwar period urban tenants adopted localised solidaristic measures to defend their rights. While the local authority and social housing associations were initiating housing provision to combat shortages, private landlords had increased rents despite regulative legislation set out by government.⁵³ As a consequence poorer tenants in private rented housing succumbed to housing destitution, and in order to intervene in the exploitative private rental system, private tenants set up *Århus Huslejerforening* (the Århus Tenants' Association) in 1918, modelled on similar organisations in the capital. In Copenhagen tenants' associations deployed actions such as rent strikes, while the Århusian Tenants' Association adopted an increasingly facilitating role between tenants and private landlords.⁵⁴

Although Communists saw the organisation of tenants as a promise of consumer intervention in housing policy, the Århusian tenants' association would have had little real power to effect radical social change. Contemporary critics suggested that certain tenants' organisations in the 1920s functioned more as middle class interest groups.⁵⁵ The Århus Tenants' Association for example provided legal representation for tenants in dispute with private landlords: dealing with complaints regarding rent increases, concerns about maintenance, and provided general information on policy changes affecting tenure. It published a small membership periodical (*Lejernyt*) to generally inform its members of their rights. Although Århus Tenants' Association overwhelmingly worked for tenants in private rented accommodation, there were some attempts at creating similar, affiliated groups inside some social housing associations, such as at *Solbakken*, a department managed by the housing association *Det Sociale Boligbyggeri*.⁵⁶

So, the potential and opportunity for participation by residents and tenants in their local housing areas was made possible. Backed by key personalities in the city's leadership

Århus' social housing seemed underpinned by democratic and egalitarian advantages. It is clear that not all was as gratifyingly participatory as the principles promised. However the cultural expression and promotion of co-operation and fairness in housing management continued. It pervaded a structure of feeling in the local housing associations that is important for the self-definition of Danish housing associations throughout the twentieth century. A combination of the rhetorical promotion of particular ideals with cultural practices that involved adult and child residents in the local housing area, may have provided the specific inflection of social housing that was experienced in Århus.

Values and role models: ideal members of housing associations

Thus the central, irreproachable virtue of democratic collective ownership in non-profit making housing associations was popularly promoted by Danish housing associations as an ideal. Through the voluntary nature of housing representatives the dedication and commitment to the service seemed unquestionable, and central to the engagement by volunteers was the membership of a much wider housing movement.⁵⁷

It is useful here to examine the overarching ideals that coloured the sensibilities and set the tone within housing associations. The ethical foundations of self-help in Danish social housing associations were evoked within the notion of co-operation and the solidaristic nature of the model member.⁵⁸ These values were embedded in the discourse of the Danish housing movement throughout the post-war years with different emphases over time to engage members in the work of their housing association. There were two areas within the ethical complex that were key to the social capital of associational life: the people who voluntarily devoted their energies and commitment to the housing 'cause,' and the socio-cultural foundations on which the social housing cause rested.

To take the latter first: From their early beginnings social housing associations had been constituted as self-governing organisations. The co-operative principles that enabled members to gain dividends on their share of the association's profit were in large part withdrawn as national housing policies instituted '*almennyttige*' – general needs, non-profit making - housing associations, as was shown in the previous chapter. Nevertheless the co-operative ideals remained in the association's cultural expression, such as the openness and social equity of the membership, the voting rights of households and the

local representative democracy of the tenant representatives committees. Encouraged by inter-war housing policies social housing associations came to focus a large part of their work towards large, poor family households, while continuing their provisions for other social groups. Housing associations emphasised their social role as post-war municipal allocation policies targeted social housing associations as the appropriate sector for poorer families and personal housing subsidies increased. In rhetorical turns the housing association movement revealed its engagement with social justice in housing provision:

We can, based on the experiences, which the housing movement has gained through previous generations, tell the rest of the population that it is not at all economic utopia to give the whole population decent housing conditions... We have proven that it is cheaper and better when the population administers its own housing, than when it is left to speculation.⁵⁹

The co-operative role of providing a third means of production and consumption beyond state and market was adopted, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s the high cost to society of regulating housing through the market was criticised. In its place the message of the co-operative and non-profit making housing association that would create horizontally integrated, rationalised housing construction systems building to high specifications pervaded housing discourse. The quality of new housing, the standard of fittings, such as kitchen units, and other added values such as children's playgrounds, landscaped local environments and shared amenities reflected the benefits tenants gained from in their new homes.

Although the leadership of social housing associations made up the minority of the association's membership it was the ideals of social engagement projected onto the active Committee member that reflected an element of Danish democracy. The ideal type of person who worked for the housing 'cause' or 'movement' was represented in celebratory anniversary publications.⁶⁰ Characteristically 'housing people' were strongly motivated, often by social democracy and a sense of social commitment spending long hours in meetings and travelling to the local authority or the Ministry of Housing in Copenhagen to negotiate the best possible solutions for their housing associations.⁶¹

The housing association administration contained a gendered dimension. Leading members of housing associations were commonly working class men. Heads of

households, typically men, used the household vote at general meetings, while their wives would turn up for the post-meeting socials.⁶² It was also men who dominated in the political arena, architectural circles, and usually men who headed the NFDHA, authored articles on housing matters in the housing association magazines, and spoke at annual conventions. Furthermore, the band of housing association brothers was tied to a work ethic that seemed as strong within the housing association as it was in their working lives. For working class members of the association leadership the administrative nature of their work would have contrasted with their factory based work. Learning administrative practices, decision-making skills, and policy development pushed some into a local civic life of municipal involvement.

However it would be wrong to assume that this ideal was wholly applicable within all housing associations. Some housing 'companies' had less inclination to include residents' interests in their administration processes. When *Det sociale boligbyggeri for Århus og omegn* started its life as a self-governing housing company it might have had ambitions to build for social causes, but throughout the 1950s it only included a single residents' representative on its central Committee. As early system built projects proved faulty and were causing problems, residents protested at the lack of representation.⁶³ Moreover, if housing association leaders stressed the united housing cause as a national venture, in Århus it is likely that associations were competing for limited land. Suburban Councils were not embracing the move of Århusian social housing associations to their areas.⁶⁴

The leadership of housing associations necessarily absorbed a minority of the membership. But housing association tenants, usually spoken of as 'residents' (*beboere*), were reminded of their responsibility to the housing association through their status as shared 'owners' of the social housing they inhabited. Paying a membership subscription to the association and a deposit towards the cost of the property, and subsequently paying cost rents, conferred a certain level of influence.⁶⁵ 'Cost rent' was in Danish '*boligafgift*,' a word that implied less a tenancy position than that of co-ownership. The word literally meant 'housing duty,' the fee paid to maintain the property and re-investment in new construction, rather than a rent paid by a tenant to an external property-owner. Bolstered by the compliance of committed members their representatives worked to create modern housing forms embedding cultural activities within designed neighbourhood units (Fig.

3.4a,b). Residents therefore had access to a variety of cultural events organised by the housing associations in order to create local communal bonds.

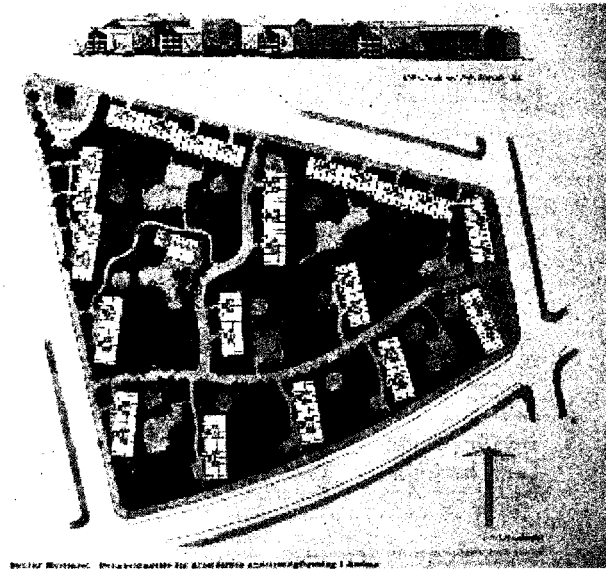


Fig. 3.4

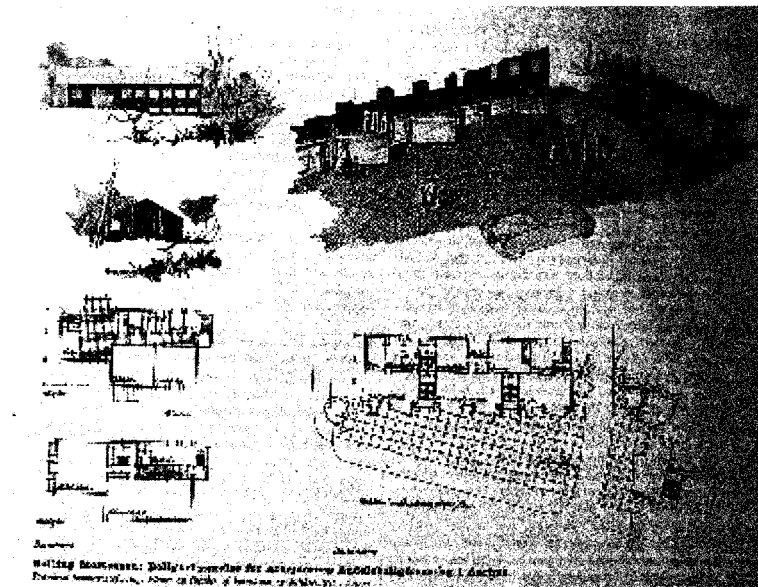


Fig. 3.4a,b A view of AAB's Ryttreparken housing area at Århus, designed by the architect, Salling-Mortensen. The three and four storey blocks of flats were laid out informally in parkland, designed with trees and open play areas for children. The estate would be serviced by a nursery, local shops and a community house. *Arkitektens Ugehæfte*, 1948, (50), p.125-128

Cultural practices in the local social housing area

Apart from the institutional processes outlined above, Århusian housing associations integrated cultural activities within individual housing areas as part of a Danish way of life – an integral element of their political culture. They played a significant symbolic role by attempting to anchor themselves in the collective consciousness of the community. They sought to involve the city, as part of the national housing movement (*boligbevægelsen*) – as well as the local housing area. However when the association went as far as advocating modern design reform for individual homes, in some instances providing advice on the appropriate choice of furnishings– the strategy could be interpreted as overbearingly didactic and overly interventionist.⁶⁶

Århusian social housing associations in this way sought to establish informal community bonds within neighbourhoods. The tradition of Shrovetide children's parties (*fastelavn*) for example, were annually occurring events provided by local housing associations throughout the twentieth century (Fig. 3.5, 3.6).⁶⁷ Other cultural activities such as children's clubs and film showings supplemented the annual festivities involving adult residents. Indeed children and youth featured prominently in the consciousness of associations, often represented in entries or articles in anniversary publications, to firmly anchor associational life as nurturing future generations.

The image of social housing associations as co-operative, egalitarian and democratic institutions was projected into the culture in the local housing areas. It aimed to enable collaborative self-help culture to settle into a Danish cultural modernity in which continuities played an important role. During the German occupation for example AAB used its anniversary publication to emphasise the importance of the association in building Danish culture: AAB created housing where contented people lived, where one would find Danish '*hygge*': a sense of security and informal cosiness, embedded in a clean, urban modernity to which the housing association contributed.⁶⁸ AAB nurtured its central recipient and beneficiary, the family. Welfare of children through healthy housing, generous playgrounds and state-subsidised childcare institutions were its progressive concerns. The housing association was represented as a vital pillar of the Danish community, a modern organisation sensitive to the deeper traditions of social democratic culture.



Fig. 3.5



Figs. 3.5-3.6 Activities for children as represented in housing association publications. Fig. 3.5 shows children climbing on a frame in the Rytterparken area, 1950s; Lokalthistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker. Fig. 3.6 shows the Shrovetide activities of children hitting a barrel – the prize for hitting the last fragment of barrel to the ground was to become king or queen for the day, Gellerupparken, 1970s; Brabrand Boligforening, *Skræppebladet*, 1970s.

Furthermore, the collaborative bonds between the housing associations and the Århusian construction trades could be promoted through the traditional raising-the-roof ceremonies (*rejsegilder*). The raising-the-roof ceremony had a long history in Denmark, reaching back to the sixteenth century.⁶⁹ It was a tradition rooted in the rural practices of mutual support in the construction of farmhouses, and involved a festive ritual of eating and drinking alcohol. It celebrated the labour involved in finishing the building construction process and continued into the twentieth century. For Århusian housing associations it was a public cultural event at which leading members of the housing association and civic representatives could make speeches and formally show their gratitude to builders and bricklayers. The events were commonly reported in the local press, and functioned as symbols of housing progress.⁷⁰ Nevertheless although cultural events such as raising the roof ceremonies took place at the micro-level within neighbourhoods, the neighbourhoods themselves were subject to public planning policies and hopeful projections for socially amenable living, which will be considered below. The next chapter will examine in more detail the techniques of promotion used by housing authorities in the two cities to project their social housing projects.

Town planning in Århus in the 1950s and 1960s

While housing associations represented themselves as local democratic bodies that worked towards social justice in housing provision, the conditions for the erection of new housing areas were dependent on the wider planning concerns of the local authority. In Denmark, and hence in Århus, the majority of social housing projects were designed according to Anglo-American town planning principles flavoured with Swedish social democracy.⁷¹ But planning nevertheless needed to reflect local contingencies. Århusian post-war planning practice, although aiming for a grand master plan, in the final count became a pragmatic set of suggestions. It became clear that although the intention to plan was to facilitate social progress of urban development, both practical and idealising inhibitions impinged on Århus' spatial development.

The spatial restriction of Århus by its surrounding parish councils was a key problem. This had in the past led to much denser urban housing forms in the city.

An imbalance in the distribution of social classes was growing. In addition the local government of Århus feared that a migration of the better off social groups to authorities with a lower local tax rate would put a strain on the city's finances. The answer was to create integrated planning solutions, including housing areas, to encompass the Greater Århus region. Two key planning proposals appeared in the 1950s and 1960s: In the *Plan for Greater Århus* of 1954 the practical and administrative relationships between the core city and its surrounding suburban parish councils were considered. The *1966 Greater Århus Plan* viewed the wider city in terms of interlinked centres.

The suburban councils had worked collaboratively on joint planning concerns since the 1920s, but were later forced to collaborate with Århus Council. Århus was by the mid-1950s almost fully built up, but continued to be hemmed in by independent parish councils. They benefited from the attractions of lower, local taxation rates, but retained a close location to cultural services in Århus. The smaller local authorities were keen to retain a sense of democratic integrity when faced with the dominance of the encroaching city. Therefore, the municipality of Århus needed a close collaborative relationship to enable a compromise on an integrated urban expansion beyond the confines of its administrative borders. The tool for post-war planning of Århus became the Greater Århus Commission after the 1949 Town Planning regulation (*Byreguleringsloven*) made negotiated planning statutory to prevent un-controlled urban spread.⁷² Furthermore, the Town Development Committee (*Byudviklingsudvalg*) had been established to co-ordinate meetings between the local authorities to plan the city's growth. This did not prevent continuous tensions over urban space in Århus until the 1970 Local Authority Reform Act, which enforced local government mergers.⁷³

The Greater Århus Commission in this way worked to unify planning concerns in order to improve the social distribution of the population. The Commission worked to unify planning concerns and it is in this context that urban design and housing areas provided the focus for pragmatic development proposals. Although the planning model of 1947 for Copenhagen had foreseen urban development as small towns in clusters around stations on radiating railway lines, the so-called 'finger plan,' Århus had a different problem.⁷⁴

Each suburban Council had allowed for local growth around villages. The villages still bore traits of a rural culture, albeit suburbanisation was spreading fast. Bringing social housing to the villages and out-lying towns at first seemed a drain on resources. No conclusive decision was in the final count made, and so the *Plan* simply sought to open up the suburban councils to urban expansion: The 1954 *Plan* concluded with an option of four different – and compromised - planning solutions for residential development (Fig. 3.7).

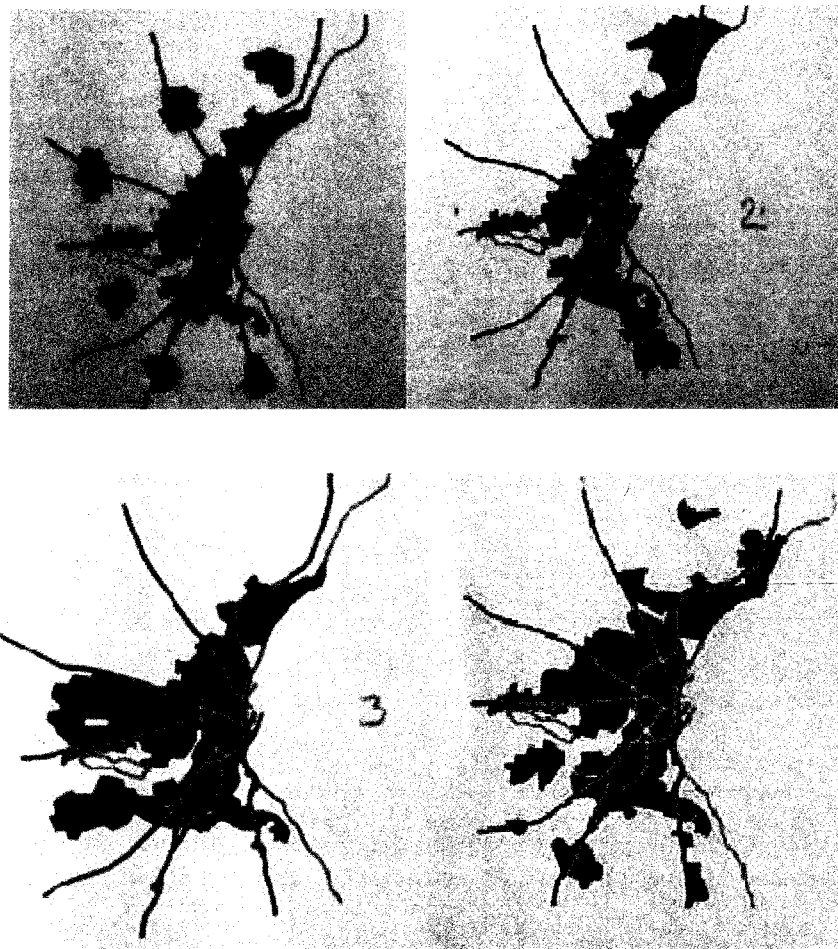


Fig. 3.7 Four proposed lines of urban development for Århus, 1954 – read clockwise: the plans suggest 1.) satellite developments along radiating roads (top left); 2.) a north-south spread of the city along the coast to exploit the benefits of proximity to sea and woods; 3) spread to the west to create shorter distances to the centre of the city; bottom left); and 4.) a long term proposal to select the optimal areas for housing and industry. Stor-Århuskommisionen, *Egnsplan for Stor-Århus*, Århus: 1954, p.60-61

Inner and middle zones would enable urban residential and industrial expansion, framed by an outer green belt that would support agriculture. Satellite town development was considered with reference to British garden cities, modified by the smaller, Danish geographical scale. Other proposals tried to picture the possible advantages taken by population moves within the area, such as social mobility leading to higher income groups settling to the north and south of the city attracted by aesthetic sea views.⁷⁵ Yet ultimately the Plan failed to set out any firm design - even predicting an optimal urban size seemed difficult:

In choosing the ideal city size economic, aesthetic, ethical and technical relationships will play a role, and it will be extremely difficult to weigh the various factors against each other. It can certainly only be a question of a purely subjective evaluation.⁷⁶

This was an explicit statement of the ambiguous nature of the planning process, which the *1966 Greater Århus Plan* sought to overcome. In the *1966 Plan* local centre formation was key to the planning model, with a hierarchy of larger urban centres connecting minor sub-centres. Residential areas would develop around so-called B and C centres – too large to be neighbourhood units, but including such units within their remit - determined by shopping and other amenities, planned to support the central city services (the A centre). Significantly, the housing survey in the plan dealt almost entirely with the role of different housing types in the city's future growth, with little explicit mention of social housing.

The problem of how to architecturally and sociologically solve the problem of neighbourhoods was only implicitly referred to in the *1966 Plan*. It might have been assumed that the problem should be left to Århusian and suburban housing associations to be responsible for constructing and maintaining publicly supported residential districts. The social democratic mayor of Århus, Bernhardt Jensen, acknowledged the general problem: what was the best way to reconcile levels of technical and aesthetic planning, for the most part performed by architects and engineers, with the political aims of local authorities. Such factors might have wider sociological consequences?⁷⁷ Democratic planning processes called for negotiation between the various interests: economic, industrial, distributive, social and sociological. The welfare of the city should not be solely subject to the vagaries of technical requirements.⁷⁸

Nevertheless the *1966 Plan* concerned itself with housing typologies, rather than focusing on urban neighbourhoods. Since the Århus Council Statistics' Office had first published figures on housing it had quantified these by housing type, whether flats or single detached houses. With pressure on Århus City Council to acquire further areas for building more housing, it emphasised the relationship between the ratio of flats to detached, low rise housing between the suburban councils and central Århus. The distinction was pronounced: 90 % of housing in Århus were flats in 1954, contrasting with only 31 % in the suburbs.⁷⁹ By 1966 the figure for Århus had barely changed, Århus city contained 89 % flats, whereas housing for Greater Århus as a whole comprised 73.5 % flats, well above the national average of 48.5 %.⁸⁰ Only few suburban local municipalities were willing to allow the erection of flats built by social housing associations in their areas, since this would have resulted in an increase of social service requirements and a reduction in land values.⁸¹ Århus on the other hand had seen a continuous construction of flats since the late nineteenth century, and the tradition remained unquestioned as a housing solution. Instead of reducing the quantity of flats, Århus' housing needs could only be solved by increasing the number of flats, distributed beyond the city boundaries.

At the local level social housing projects were built as neighbourhood units with the intention of materially embedding ideals of good community living into the built environment.⁸² Local authorities approved housing areas built by social housing associations, which were designed to represent 'towns within the town'. In turn architects contracted by housing associations fitted the neighbourhood unit into the wider Århusian town-planning framework, for example *Rytterparken* (1949-52) by *Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening* (AAB), *Skovvangsparken* (1951-52) by 'Annex' and *Søvangen* (1953-55) by *Brabrand Boligforening* on the outskirts of the city (Fig. 3.8).⁸³ But how these local housing areas fitted into a greater whole became the focus of the Greater Århus Commission through the consideration of local-level plans.

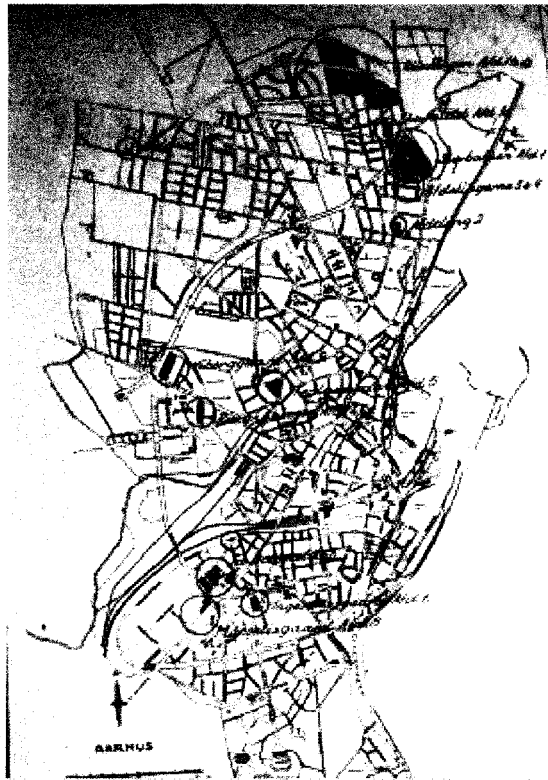


Fig. 3.8 Map of Århus locating AAB's contributions to neighbourhood unit planning, marking up housing areas such as the garden city quarter, Riisvangen (1920s), the perimeter blocks, Teglgården, (1926-27) and Marselisgården (1938). AAB, *Vi bygger selv*, Århus: AAB, 1944

The Århusian neighbourhood unit debate

Although neighbourhood units were barely mentioned in the urban plans local level plans (*dispositionsplaner*) did consider housing areas. When Århus Council announced and judged an architectural competition for its last available, large scale housing area, *Langenæs*, in 1949 (Fig. 3.9), it clearly wanted a design that reflected a fully integrated local community, with schools, shops and leisure facilities readily available to residents.⁸⁴ The Council proposed mixed development in terms of forms of tenure, which would help keep residents within the city. This meant that over an extended building period of more than ten years, the area grew to consist of privately owned flats, social housing association blocks, and a series of collectively serviced flats (*kollektivhuse*), run as self-governing institutions.⁸⁵

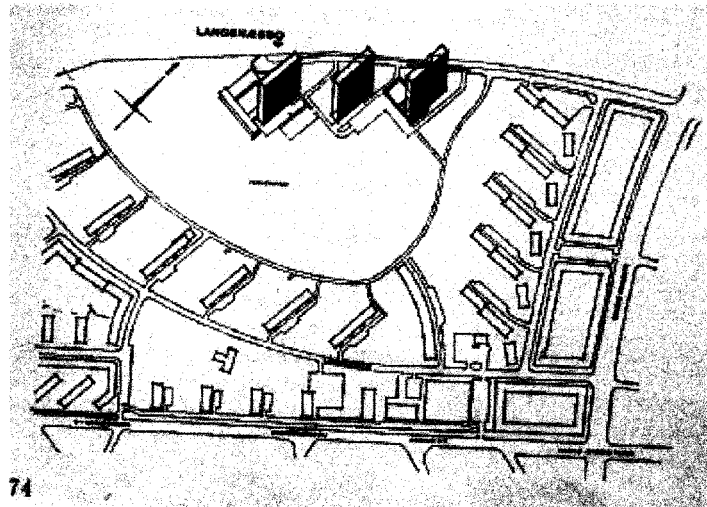


Fig. 3.9 Proposed plan for the Langenæs housing area 1949. The curved boundary line demarcating the area above the three slab blocks indicates an incline leading to the railway line. A *kollektivhus* was projected for one of the large blocks, while the road lying on the periphery of the landscaped area around the blocks led to smaller flats and local amenities. Marselisgaarden (1938) by AAB is the perimeter block outlined to the bottom right of the plan. In Hans Erling Langkilde, *Kollektivhuset – en boligforms udvikling i dansk arkitektur*, Cph.: Dansk Videnskabs Forlag, 1970

The immediate post-war debate on the meaning of Danish democracy was reflected in the hegemonic town planning ideals of the neighbourhood unit, social mix in the locale and the social engagement sparked by local patriotism. In municipal, housing association and architectural circles the belief in the democratic potential of Mumfordian-inspired neighbourhood unit dominated the discourse. Architects and social housing associations embraced the principles of the neighbourhood unit as a symbol of their contribution to democratic living. However a budding critique seemed to test the validity of the democratic ideal inherent in the neighbourhood unit.

Theodor Geiger, a German sociologist working at Århus University in the late 1940s sparked a debate on the legitimacy of the new design phenomenon.⁸⁶ It is important to note with regard to the local Århusian connection, that Geiger's comments arose at a conference sponsored by Århus Council.⁸⁷ Svend Unmack Larsen, The city's social democratic Mayor, was a committee member of *Dansk Byplanlaboratorium* (the Danish non-governmental town planning association), which was involved in planning urban housing. By hosting a national town planning conference Larsen hoped to provide a means of updating the city on the latest professional town planning practice.⁸⁸ Geiger

shared this intention: those municipal administrators and busy technicians who would otherwise be unable to access planning theory directly, would learn to become sceptical towards adopting sociological models wholesale, which had not been empirically tested.

Geiger's scepticism questioned the hegemonic view of the neighbourhood and the meaning of community that was developing within the housing movement. He questioned an un-critical and programmatic adoption of Mumfordian ideas.⁸⁹ Even if healthy citizen welfare was inherent to this seemingly organic idea of urban development, its future success was not assured. Geiger's concern was partly with the hegemonic status of the 'unsubstantiated' Mumford town-planning model. He called for further sociological research, rather than relying on a *belief* in the territorial community unit.⁹⁰ The idea of environmental determinism embedded in the notion of an organic community, based on neighbourhood relationships, was an unsustainable foundation for architectural design.

Instead Geiger hypothesised a model of community based on kinship networks and work relations divorced from the territorial locality. He predicted that automobile traffic would grow. Families and individual household units would increasingly seek social solace in the privacy of their homes. He questioned the concept of the active, 'good' citizen, who participated as leaders of local associations (the communitarian notion present in the Mumfordian vision) - referring to the idea of community centres along British lines.⁹¹ Active and participating ideal citizens might even join cliques of local-level despots (*forenings-matadorer*) with no overall benefit to community cohesion. At the local level citizens would only be able to discuss tiresome petty issues (*lokale småtterier*), in a 'democratic playroom' - an idea that would be relevant to the organisation of social housing associations. Geiger suggested that greater and more important problems necessarily required local and national governmental control.⁹² His was a warning of the hidden totalitarianism perceived to be lying dormant, by imposing Mumford's concepts on an unwitting population (*tvangs-kollektivisme*).⁹³ Geiger volunteered to fill the gap in sociological research by providing empirical analyses, on actual experiential factors significant for citizens.⁹⁴ The social engineering aspect of town planning would require collaboration between architects, engineers and sociologists. At this early date of 1948, Geiger showed surprising foresight, which have since been coined 'postmodern.'⁹⁵

Doubtlessly such questions were increasingly relevant for local housing associations as they expanded their resident base and projected large new housing schemes.

Unfortunately Geiger died before being able to account for his theory in practice. He completed one piece of empirical research, which sought to describe the social changes that had taken place through urbanisation in the first half of the twentieth century. Using Århus as a case study he revealed the complexities of contemporary Danish social mobility, the presence of rural family origins in different generations living, in an 'average' Danish city.⁹⁶ Geiger concluded that Denmark was the most prominent proponent of egalitarian democracy in Europe, but signs of an increasing inflexibility in social mobility in Århus were also revealed. Significantly, this work was intended as a means to question assumptions about linear 'upward' social mobility. Geiger's social model assumed that the consequences of political and social egalitarianism would be less ambition for class elevation,⁹⁷ which after the Second World War would have significant consequences for democracy.

In Geiger's opinion Danish patriotism did not arise from any particular sense of identification with certain cities. Rather, the source of Danish pride was national patriotism. But this assumption was contradicted by the view of local municipal technical officers by contrast held that citizens held a hierarchy of patriotic sentiments ranging from the nearest locality to the nation:

If you look for example at a citizen of the suburb to Århus, Åbyhøj, he is likely to feel himself to be partly a citizen of Åbyhøj, partly of Greater Århus, probably as a Jutlander and partly as a Dane; and it seems natural that there should exist equivalent agencies to which he can direct his influence, to make his voice known.⁹⁸

In such a view localities and a sense of belonging was part of the psychological make-up needed to engage and motivate citizens to involve themselves in a hierarchy of local democratic processes. This view echoed the hegemonic Mumfordian notion of optimal urban unit sizes, but also incorporated the issue of land speculation and the administrative interests in reducing this, with particular reference to the problem of incompatible, and unequal concerns of cities and the surrounding suburbs. The Danish land regulation system was compared with the British Uthwatt report and the British 1947 Town and

Country Planning Act, and similar public regulation in Danish legislation seemed to be needed. More importantly, the possibility of continued decentralised regulation was not excluded even if mergers between councils would take place under an expanded local government machine. It was in the final count the municipal view that dominated urban developments in Århus. Yet it is clear that local civic leaders were sensitive to the complexities of a humane planning apparatus. Housing would need to incorporate the comforts for everyday living, nurture a sense of community and by extension nurture a civilised, democratic life form.

Newcastle: post-war housing crisis and planning solutions

In similar ways to other large British industrial cities, Newcastle underwent developments in its housing policy that laid the foundations for the management of social housing for the following decades. Newcastle had experienced little war damage, it had produced almost no housing during the war, and many activities usually undertaken by the housing authority had been suspended.⁹⁹ Publicly funded housing provided by Newcastle Council was part of the city's general reconstructive efforts in the post-war period. The pressure to build suitable housing was compelling. By October 1950, Newcastle Council had approx.15,000 people on its waiting list for housing.¹⁰⁰

The authority's main concern was to enable homecoming servicemen and their families access to healthy family housing, whilst those residing in slums and outdated dwellings in the older quarters of the city required re-housing. Some homeless people on Tyneside were housed in barracks across the region, and several family households were often cramped together in one residence. A few squatters lodged at Waverdale Camp in Walker, but never featured strongly in the Council's concerns.¹⁰¹ Newcastle Council relocated groups of squatters to the old Rochester Dwellings tenements in the east end of the city, with their inherited stigma as housing for the poorest.¹⁰² Other families were spread across the country having no home of their own.¹⁰³ The scale of the problem was great, and planning for future urban and regional development became a primary concern.

A series of national policies pushed housing to the fore as the most pressing issue for post-war reconstruction.¹⁰⁴ British social housing had from 1919 been the responsibility of State and local government, complemented by a few small-scale philanthropic

contributions in the larger cities. In the North East region there was a continued resistance to housing associations as a complement to their housing strategies.¹⁰⁵ In the post-war period planning and clearances were primarily resolved through technical solutions to Newcastle's urban renewal, with social housing featuring as a statistically weighty problem. Social welfare issues inevitably arose to challenge such technical management, leading to organisational change and renewal.

Newcastle City Council's post-war housing management recommenced by re-organising and establishing significant committees, departments and key personnel to service its growing housing responsibilities. City Architects played an instrumental role in facilitating post-war 'mass' housing provision.¹⁰⁶ The city's Councillors emphasised their primary concern for advancing large quantities of housing, and housing thus became a central factor during election campaigns.¹⁰⁷ In order to fulfil numerical pledges towards housing in Newcastle it was felt that technical staff would require secure positions within local government apparatus to rationalise municipal housing administration. Prior to the war municipal architects had been employed across several Council departments, including the Education and Town Improvement and Street Committees. With the appointment of George Kenyon as City Architect in 1947 a centralisation of architectural functions took place. The appointment represented a consensus agreement across the Council that the expertise of a professional architect, skilled and with credentials firmly anchored in his professional establishment would uphold the responsibilities proper to his role.¹⁰⁸ Thus, by appointing qualified staff the accountability of the Council was legitimised. Its professional Officers would provide the best possible service to the city's residents. The responsibilities held by the City Architect's office included the design and repairs of schools, the maintenance and alteration of municipal buildings, and of course designing the Council's housing schemes.¹⁰⁹ The commitment to planning new communities according to the guidelines of a national professional institution was thus made possible.

The City Architect, George Kenyon, was the most senior ranking Officer in charge of designing Newcastle's council housing construction. His professional pedigree included training at the Liverpool School of Architecture and a period of practice in New York, followed by an appointment as a local authority architect for Leeds (working on the

Quarry Hill housing estate), and later Manchester Councils.¹¹⁰ By the time he retired in 1962 Kenyon had been responsible for the design of around 19,000 council dwellings in Newcastle, housing almost 60,000 people. With the appointment of such a prestigious technical expert Newcastle attempted to propel itself into the modern era. The role of British municipal architects was fundamentally advisory, fitting into a complex municipal and state housing system that negotiated the requirements of several actors: civil servants, Council and State Politicians, as well as bureaucratic hierarchies that placed their own specific constraints on architecture.¹¹¹ Certainly this was also the case in Newcastle. The Council defended the City Architect's professional judgment when for example his work met harsh criticism in the local press.¹¹² But paradoxically the Council also made it clear that it would not support the professional development of its technical staff.¹¹³

Providing large quantities of housing seemed indicative of Council performance, Newcastle Councillors therefore challenged the qualitative aspects of architectural work through their demands for economical building types. This led to adopting building contracts at the cheaper end of tenders presented for housing projects.¹¹⁴ That such downgrading in the quality and expectation of social housing took place can be seen in the infamous case of the Noble Street flats, or the houses on the Slatyford Lane Estate, in the West End of the city, built under a Progressive Council. The case of construction faults and condensation problems in newly built non-traditional council housing on the Slatyford Lane estate caused serious attention in the local press during the mid-1950s. Tenants wrote lists of complaints to their local political representatives to call attention to their problems. Tenants also assembled at a public protest meeting, forcing the Housing Committee to visit the estate, and encouraged the Housing Management Committee in conjunction with the Housing Committee to improve reports to tenants.¹¹⁵

The Noble Street flats on the other hand were built to replace slum clearance, according to Conservative government policy, and were not able to support the way of life of the tenants who lived there. Later described as 'slums on the drawing board' they were demolished in 1977 after many years of tenant protest.¹¹⁶ The Noble Street flats in particular became icons of the mismanagement of Council housing. They represented an exceptional example of the residual nature of the worst quality housing stock, while the

allocation policies in the housing management of the area accelerated the spatial concentration of some of the poorest tenants of the city.

Welfare management in housing was nevertheless slow to develop. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that Newcastle in 1936 rejected the Octavia Hill housing management style promoted by the Institute of Women Housing Managers. The lack of investment in housing welfare management continued after 1945 when the Ministry of Health noted that there was a dearth in sustaining housing welfare management across the North East.¹¹⁷ It found that the region had a poor record of professional housing management, even in housing associations such as the North East Housing Association. On the other hand, some staff in Newcastle's Treasury Department were members of the Institute of Housing.¹¹⁸ In gender terms, historians of housing have interpreted this professional body as reflecting a more masculine orientation towards technical aspects of management practices, rather than the social welfare and domestic aspects that occupied women housing managers.¹¹⁹ Newcastle's Housing Committee certainly showed little interest in supporting the professional development of its staff early on, but then its housing department suffered staff shortages for long periods of time during the 1940s and 1950s and might not have had the capacity to allow staff development and promotion.¹²⁰ It was accepted that staff with little or no training could be appointed for lower grade positions such as rent collecting, even though such positions required close communication with council tenants, some with difficult social problems.¹²¹ When it came to the question of administering a fair and nurturing housing service, the emphasis in Newcastle was placed on creating a systematic regulative system and technical repair service, rather than synthesising it with a workable social welfare service. Albeit the municipality's priority was to house as many residents as possible, the growth of its housing units also compelled it to tackle the social aspects of managing its housing stock.

Establishing a housing management system in post-war Newcastle

In terms of managing its housing stock, Newcastle Council's housing responsibilities covered considerable numbers. The Housing Committee in Newcastle managed a stock of almost 18,000 dwellings in 1951, rising to 20,084 by 1953 - by the 1961 census there were 24,043 households under Council management.¹²² This scale of housing provision became increasingly difficult to manage by a single Housing Committee, and a Housing

Management Committee was therefore established in 1953 to concentrate on the organisation of allocations and tenant welfare issues. The Housing Committee would continue to oversee the physical maintenance of the stock and facilitate weekly rent collections on behalf of the Treasury Department.¹²³ Such a pragmatic establishment of a new Committee reflects the *ad hoc* nature of British housing management generally, as Newcastle clearly set up its administration in answer to the contemporary pressures exerted by long waiting lists and growing housing numbers, rather than in anticipation of future planned housing developments.¹²⁴ It also reflects the inheritance of a centralised housing management structure from the sanitary policies of the early twentieth century, perhaps highlighting the view that social management functions were marginal to physical improvements.¹²⁵

Despite claims that a fair system of allocation had been created it was realised that not all was as clear-cut as it might seem. The allocation of tenants in Newcastle followed the points system generally applied across British council housing. Points were given for ex-servicemen, married couples, and according to the level and duration tenants had lived in slums or unsanitary conditions, the number of children in a household and by levels of overcrowding or degrees of homelessness.¹²⁶ A two-year residential qualification was accepted although some leniency was likely in assessments of particular cases.¹²⁷ Points suggested an almost objective means for the just distribution of new houses and better quality housing stock. Over a period allocations were prioritised by providing 71 % to ex-servicemen, and 37 % according to the level of illness in the household (9.7 % of all allocation were placed in favour of tuberculosis).¹²⁸ In cases where the Housing Committee judged the health of the city to be threatened by poor housing conditions and called for flexibility in the points system, the Housing Management Committee rejected any bending of the rules (indeed the Committee was criticised for the subjective nature of tenant grading using points, and it is therefore not surprising that it was reluctant to override official control mechanisms).¹²⁹

Allegations arose that such practices were problematic. Allocations were founded on home visits undertaken by housing investigators classifying tenants according to a grading system that raised questions about the system's objectivity.¹³⁰ In addition some Councillors suggested tenants should have continuously updated information, made

accessible at the city's libraries, to enable them to judge their position on the waiting list, rather than simply knowing the rules of the points system.¹³¹ However this was thought unnecessary due to the Housing Management Committee's self-perception as being 'conscientious,' while others raised suspicion about the tactic thus made available to tenants. Some tenants might actively create their own points.¹³² Thus tenant education could be seen as an important element in producing compliant tenants, but total transparency in management procedures could inter-pose unwanted behaviour. When it came to providing sufficient information for tenants to potentially challenge the regulated allocation system, being 'housing minded' did not mean tenants were able to freely deploy their own tactics in improving their housing conditions. It referred instead to their behaviour in relation to the physical housing stock and the civilised engagement within local neighbourhood communities. It was implied that tenants should rather patiently wait their turn in the housing queue, even if the treatment they received was sometimes patronising.

When management of the social requirements of tenants became pressing, such as the need to categorise priorities for housing allocation, the Housing Department revealed cracks in its seemingly objective professionalism. Undercurrents of negative values against 'difficult' tenants from within the Council occasionally erupted explicitly in Council. Not all tenants would be allocated a suitable home until they conformed to norms of cleanliness and order, compliant with the classification system defined by the Housing Department:

'.... we have some people who are absolutely filthy, with no furniture, and we have to protect other tenants by making sure that these applicants improve their conditions before we give them houses.'¹³³

This blunt statement elicited an angry counter-response in Council, and may not be typical. It nevertheless revealed the unconscious continuation of values held towards the un-deserving poor that resulted in uneven housing allocations. What this Councillor termed 'substandard applicants' were from another view people living in slums who could not be blamed for their housing conditions. This was a problem for social welfare to deal with.¹³⁴ However by the 1960s, slum clearances and urban renewal made poverty inescapably apparent. Families with multiple problems became the subject of studies by

medical researchers and Council Committees through initial attempts at holistic social solution – targeted at individual households.¹³⁵

If managed well council housing might educate tenants in issues of good citizenship and neighbourhood relations. In its argument for a Housing Management Committee Newcastle's housing authority cited the Central Housing Advisory Committee's 1938 Report echoing nineteenth century reformist notions on social improvement of tenants:

Management must include for more than rent collection and the ordering of repairs, for unless some steps are taken to educate the tenant as to secure his co-operation, the landlord, striving to maintain his property and the tenant destroying it by his neglect will remain warring parties. Hence good management postulates the application of skill in treating the person who is paying for the commodity so that he too may do his share of preserving its value.... a form of social education and aims at teaching a new and inexperienced community to be 'housing minded.'¹³⁶

Characteristically this citation included a reference to the destructive nature of tenants – and reveals implicit mistrust of its dependants by the housing authorities. From the point of view of the Housing Management Committee the administration of housing needed to be as efficient and stable as possible.

The Housing Management Committee nevertheless received information from tenants requesting support for local community provisions, or when frustrations became urgently felt. Local tenant associations might for example send in petitions for the establishment of meeting places, the upkeep of their housing estate, or their worries regarding rent increases might be voiced in letters or in the press.¹³⁷ But whether the municipality supported the requests was at the discretion of the Housing Committee.

Newcastle's tenant associations were established by tenants on new and older housing estates to encourage social and recreational activities. In some cases they arose as a reaction to a perception that the Council neglected their housing infrastructure.¹³⁸ They commonly wrote to the Housing Committee requesting access to meeting huts, in order to organise their social activities: children's competitions, gardening competitions and sports. Until the 1960s tenants' associations featured only marginally in the Council's housing concerns. Nevertheless, gardening for example, had in the immediate post-war

been thought to be a means to encourage active community formation and a way into active local citizenship building by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.¹³⁹ Tenants' gardening pursuits became a way for Newcastle's housing managers to monitor compliant tenant behaviour, by encouraging gardening competitions and measuring the condition of gardens as a sign of respectable tenant behaviour.

Technical and financial responsibilities however, remained primary concerns of Newcastle Council. Repairs and technical assistance was facilitated by the Architect's office. Two estates supervisors each provided support for respectively the east and west ends of the city, overseeing a staff of seasonal technicians.¹⁴⁰ Thus the two administrative sections in Newcastle reflected the double-sided nature of Newcastle's council housing management that was to affect its strategies over the following decades.¹⁴¹ On the one hand it continued in the role of landlord, as property owner of houses and flats. On the other hand the social issues relating to tenant behaviour and ways of life demanded attention, albeit that this latter problem was fraught with ambivalences towards certain social groups that challenged the implicit normative expectations of the politicians and Officers in charge. The ambivalence towards the social aspects of housing management soon exposed the ideological dimension of Newcastle's post-war housing policies.¹⁴² Initially housing was represented not as a political issue, but was seen as a matter of consensus, the concern of all responsible citizens.¹⁴³ Council housing was nevertheless not a universally available provision and the stringent need to filter tenants applying for Council housing was clear. Newcastle's waiting list was swollen well into the 1950s, a clear sign that something would need to be done.

Signs of tension within Newcastle's housing management

On the other hand Newcastle Council had no system of direct democracy embedded in its housing system. It relayed its provisions through a developing bureaucratic service that slowly came to rely on a set of municipal housing professionals. It has already been shown how the Council agreed to diversify its management by adding a Committee for this purpose: it appointed first a Housing Manager in 1953 and later a Director of Housing in 1960 to co-ordinate the housing service overall. Such a system perforce created a distance between the local authority employees and tenants. The service was often paternalistic and overbearing of tenants' needs. In 1954 a petition was signed by

562 tenants protesting against the neglect of their housing needs by the Housing Management Committee. However the petition was dismissed on the ground that tenants did not understand the allocation process. No further exploration was made into the 'attitude' of the committee, although it was noted that other local authorities had more transparent allocation systems.¹⁴⁴ There is little evidence that Newcastle tenants' newsletters or information sheets existed in the 1950s, only in the 1960s with the radicalisation of tenants' associations did a more active voice arise from within the tenant body and only in this decade were public meetings used regularly by the Council (a topic which will be explored in chapter 5). Thus the opportunity for a transparent housing service was reduced in Newcastle, and resourceful tenants came to rely on individual furtive tactics in order to improve on their housing conditions.

Where Council strategies met tenant tactics potential moments of tension and stress arose in the landlord-tenant relationship.¹⁴⁵ Tactics of resistance by tenants must be seen in the light of their dependency, often bordering on powerlessness in the housing system. The housing authority kept a vigilant eye on its tenants' behaviour, and so tenant tactics did not remain hidden for long. They were revealed whenever they touched on the management facilities provided by the Council. Such a facility was the Exchange Bureau set up by the Housing Management Committee in 1954 to enable tenants to move into appropriately sized dwellings according to their changing housing needs. It provided space for interviews with tenants, and had initially been intended as a place where tenants could be introduced to each other during the transfer process. It was found, however, that tenants were 'most exacting in their requirements' and were employing schemes that would enable them to move into new and better housing faster than if they followed Council allocation guidelines.¹⁴⁶ Many tenants disliked maisonettes and flats, and were also independently seeking self-contained houses. At their first registration for a new house tenants claimed to be willing to live on any estate, but shortly after becoming council tenants they registered for a transfer. In order to balance the real needs of some against such self-interested calculations by tenants in less 'official' need, the housing authority adjusted its policies. Norms inscribed in rules such as the points system were embedded in the governance of housing, but at a micro-level tenants might act against the grain of rules. Rather than a set of openly negotiated policy terms, hegemonic housing

management strategies in such a light became a meeting place of tension and piecemeal reaction and counter-reaction.

It has been observed that local authorities in Britain were mainly interested in preserving the quiet privacy and enjoyment of their tenants' homes.¹⁴⁷ Although the large majority of council tenants reflected a stable and compliant tenure group that required little supervision or special attention, the exercise of examining strategies for containing residual social groups reveals differences in values held towards such groups. In Newcastle some housing management practices involved social control and social engineering techniques embedded in the governance of council housing.

One response to such control might lead Newcastle's resourceful slum dwellers to become instrumental in their housing tactics. Living in slums could push family-households forward on the waiting list, increasing their points in the grading system. A previous council tenant stated that she and her husband had in the 1950s actively chosen to live in a slum in the Scotswood Road area.¹⁴⁸ She knew that she in this way would be re-housed more quickly, than had she lived with her husband's family. The family were re-housed to a new house on the Newbiggin Hall council estate in 1960-61. Undoubtedly many families chose to suffer temporary squalid housing conditions rather than living with in-laws - frequently a socially fraught situation in any case. However the housing authorities were well aware of these tactics and attempted to pre-empt them partly by granting them eligibility through the points system. Interestingly there was little sign that 'community' featured as a concern in the tactic of re-housing that this tenant deployed.

It has become clear that a relationship between a centralised housing authority and its tenants contained latent tensions between the municipal administrative apparatus and the everyday life of citizens. Most tenants complied with the normative prescriptions embedded within the Newcastle housing system, but at moments when conditions became unacceptable even to the most amenable tenants, the machinery of the local authority was unable to provide a space for them to voice their position effectively. Subsequently tenant behaviour became furtive and surreptitious, confirming the dominant view by local authority officers and Councillors that tenants should be kept in check, leading to a

patronising suspicion of the people to whom they were responsible and accountable. The process fostered a self-perpetuating mutual suspicion that inhibited openness.

On his appointment as Newcastle's first Director of Housing in 1960, Graham King concluded that the management system in Newcastle was in fact on the whole good. It provided a unified service, and there was indeed a degree of understanding of the allocation process between tenants and staff.¹⁴⁹ However his professional statement also listed a host of professional practices that were in place across Britain, which, if adopted would benefit Newcastle's housing management. Following developments in professional housing practice he instigated a systematic approach to disseminating information within his Department and initiated regular meetings with staff on policy issues. King suggested the best way of spreading news to tenants was through housing assistants or rent collectors who bridged the gap between the central administration and the city's residents. The priority for the housing authorities was still problems of repairs and maintenance of property. Yet King also referred at length to the question of social welfare of council tenants. By the 1960s, during a decade of large redevelopment projects across the worst housing areas, 'difficult tenants' became increasingly visible, highlighting the ambivalence embedded within housing welfare strategies. Newcastle Council examined the issue of 'problem families' in detail, ultimately subsidising the casework approach undertaken by the Family Advice Unit.¹⁵⁰ During a period when social welfare and professional housing practices were changing, the growing awareness of the need to coordinate housing and welfare services was becoming more prescient.¹⁵¹

Newcastle's planning issues

While housing issues featured as a major political concern in the city Council planning the urban development of Newcastle became the means to ensure distribution of tenant-citizens, and regulating the local economy through social and industrial development. Post-war planning and re-building was launched in Newcastle much as in other large cities in Britain, albeit that Newcastle had not experienced physical destruction to the same degree as for example Coventry in the Midlands.¹⁵² Here was a chance to construct a fresh, well-functioning city, with well-functioning citizens in urban 'village' communities, fashioning the city for a 'new era' as it was expressed in the *Plan* for Newcastle upon Tyne in 1945.¹⁵³ As in other large British cities, Newcastle's planners

implicitly referred to Patrick Abercrombie's and J. Forshaw's *Greater London Plan* (1944) in their presentation of the *Newcastle Plan*, designed according to 'modern practice.'¹⁵⁴ Justification was presented for building suburban 'satellite towns' as self-sustaining units with population sizes defined in accordance with the number of pupils attending local primary schools, available green spaces for recreational use and the accessibility of shopping amenities, echoing Mumfordian planning ideals.

Newcastle's *Town Plan* of 1945 may well have included thoughts on a fully integrated organic style community with smaller units planned to enable healthy local environments for its citizens. It was published shortly after the war, but had no legal status.¹⁵⁵ However, as a published municipal document it did hold some ideological authority, and certainly seemed to boost civic patriotism. The local press celebrated the *Plan*'s ambition: 'They have re-planned Newcastle not only as the capital of Tyneside, but as the metropolis of the North East.'¹⁵⁶ This was almost a direct citation of the *Plan* itself. Newcastle was an 'almost metropolitan' centre of transport, industry and education. The press reception revelled in the local pride in the city's location as an administrative and commercial centre:

In the form of a book for sale to the public for 2s 6d they [Newcastle City Council] have handed over to citizens for their approval and criticism a city divided into 33 communities - 'each may be considered as a village within a city' each with its own plan of future development, an integral part of the industrial, commercial, academic, cultural and residential pattern of city life.¹⁵⁷

Newcastle was the 'metropolis' of the North East of England, yet the ambition of the Council would need to be checked by realistic goals. The press for example cautioned that the *Town Plan* was somewhat unrealistic in its conception, part of its objectives implied a building strategy of 1,000 houses a day for four years if the objectives of the Labour Party was to be fulfilled.

There was no doubt that public opinion in post-war Newcastle supported the urban patriotism embedded within the civic plans for the city, but the condition of this patriotism was based on social segregation across the city. As one observer remarked, Newcastle's social inequalities created such heterogeneous meanings of community, that in the city itself citizens would find areas they had no knowledge of. The middle-class

residents of Jesmond for example may never have visited the Scotswood Road or vice versa.¹⁵⁸ To counter-act this problem contemporary British town planning practice had proposed social mix of neighbourhoods. Spatial segregation of classes would be counter-productive to the democratic ambitions of planning and so neighbourhood units required representation from all walks of life. The Dudley Report of 1944 had recommended mixing families and single households, elderly and the young, in a variety of housing types.¹⁵⁹ The *Newcastle Plan* reflected this modern strategy but marked it with retrospective notions of a paternalistic and hierarchical social order:

It has been said that none was so good as the old manufacturing times when master and man lived near their work in the same village. This close communion between master and man kept each of their separate outlooks on life in true perspective.¹⁶⁰

The tension between the need for more open and democratic relations between classes and the oligarchic position of the Council was clear. Such was also the case with later urban plans for Newcastle in the 1950s and 1960s. A 1961 report surveying Newcastle's community pattern, considered that improved developments of local neighbourhood units in the city would establish loyalty in the citizenry, not just through local intimate, territorial connections but to the city as a whole.¹⁶¹

The 1945 *Newcastle Plan* proposed modern technical solutions to overcome such social problems: the survey, functional zoning, green belts, measuring population densities to plan for optimal community sizes and overspill areas appeared as devices for developing the city's housing areas. Overcrowding was a continuing problem and with an average density of 3.61 persons per house it was acknowledged that apart from (unspecified) overspill areas Newcastle needed multi-storey housing to 'new designs'.¹⁶² The *Greater London Plan* was cited as a model of modern fashions in town planning, to be used as a gauge for assessing optimal sizes of neighbourhood units, and to introduce the principle of mixed development.¹⁶³

Although post-war plans such as Newcastle's seemed to be imposed on an unwitting population, it has been suggested that some Labour-led British councils aimed to consult their citizens on the planning and redevelopment of their cities.¹⁶⁴ The history of British planning has been critical of planners and civic leaders, interpreting post-war British

planning strategies as authoritarian impositions. Although some city Councils may have shown an interest in the views of urban residents, Newcastle Council after a brief consideration, rejected a direct face-to-face approach in disseminating information on their *Plan* to the public.¹⁶⁵ It was felt that despite the benefits of publicity any possible controversy should be avoided. And where evidence does signal the Council's interest in mediating particular planning and housing messages, these converged with the model of engineering technical planning solutions rather than establishing a forum for debate.

The use of the neighbourhood unit in Newcastle

Thus the tone was set for the following decade during which there is little evidence that citizens were consulted on plans for housing developments. Instead urban improvements followed conventional planning patterns: the preliminary objective of planning housing areas was to survey the state of existing housing, providing a planned scheme to provide for future growth, reduce overcrowding and replace old stock. In the 1951 *Statement on Newcastle's Development Plan* by the City Engineer, Percy Parr, it was proposed that Comprehensive Development Areas would be designated. The local authority according to the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act would then have powers to buy, demolish, and redevelop obsolete housing areas.¹⁶⁶ The great number of flats, which was part of Newcastle's housing heritage, made up 56 % of the city's housing stock in 1951. It was noted that sociological analyses had found a maximum figure of 20 % to be the optimal proportion of flats - a further reason for considering comprehensive clearance. Later planning surveys of high density communities noted specific urban areas of concern, yet there was a great contrast between those community areas with high densities such as Byker, with 120.2 people per acre, and a peripheral housing area such as Fawdon, which only housed 21.3 per acre (Fig. 3.10). It was more likely to be in such areas that additional housing could be built on the model of the neighbourhood unit.

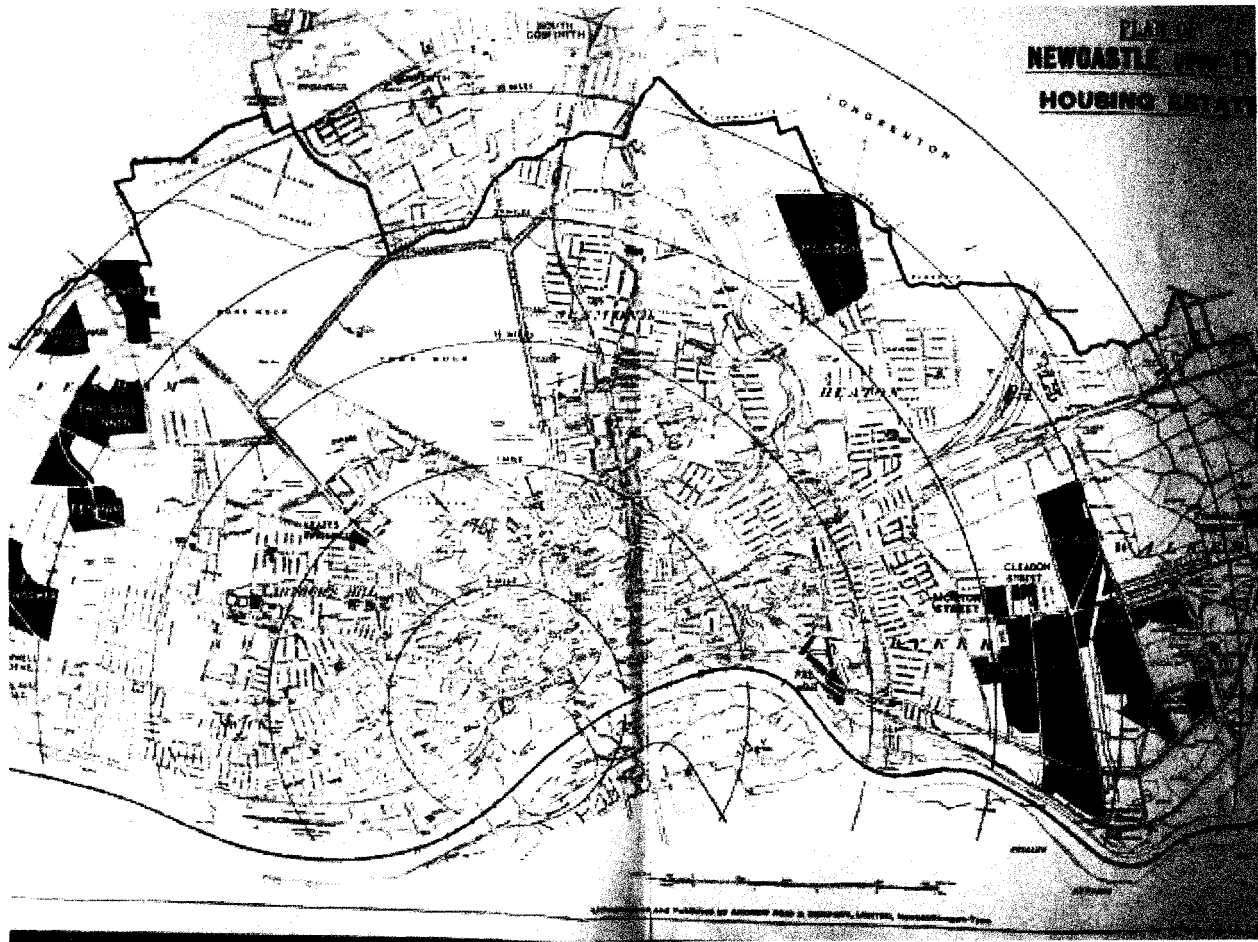


Fig. 3.10 Council housing estates in Newcastle, 1955. G. Kenyon, *Housing Report*, Newcastle: Housing Committee 1955



Fig. 3.11 Blocks of flats on the Fairways estate by G. Kenyon, early 1950s. The image suggests a neighbourhood unit design with trees and open spaces. G. Kenyon, *Housing Report*, Newcastle: Housing Committee, 1955

In Newcastle the neighbourhood unit was conceived as an optimally sized housing area to be planned around a school, local shopping and cultural amenities, with green areas for recreational enjoyment according to the Anglo-American neighbourhood unit concept. Newcastle's *Town Plan Review* from 1963 added the functional division of pedestrians and cars as essential in a housing area. Landscaping external areas and providing playgrounds for children would further enhance the estate.¹⁶⁷ By the time the concept was used in later planning surveys, the 'neighbourhood unit' suggested standardised localities to be planned strategically to fulfil particular rational and economic criteria. Despite vocal protests against the sense of no-place created by suburban Subtopias, or the problem of urban sprawl suggested by the architectural press,¹⁶⁸ Wilfred Burns, the City Planning Officer for Newcastle during the 1960s, considered it necessary to expand on the city's edge:

It is argued in some quarters that peripheral expansion of a conurbation is a bad thing in principle and new housing should be found outside the urban unit. The City Council rejects this generalisation in the case of Tyneside, which is an

extremely compact high density urban unit which in the North-West quarter abuts immediately on to vast tracts of open land.¹⁶⁹

So neighbourhood units could be created in new satellite areas on a *tabula rasa* of virgin land outside the city's boundaries as for example the Newbiggin Hall, Blakelaw or Longbenton estates of the 1950s and 1960s.

Technocratic means overrode any serious sociological, or indeed democratic considerations. Wilfred Burns is likely to have justified his proposal through the problem of limited access to land within the city boundaries. Residents in older housing areas would need to be resettled as older housing stock was demolished or revitalised (discussed further in chapter 5). To enable Newcastle's urban expansion, suburban housing estates such as Longbenton and Newbiggin Hall were built on land purchased by Northumberland County Council. New, suburban estates such as Blakelaw, were designed as self-contained areas along the neighbourhood ideals of Modernist planners. At the Blakelaw neighbourhood area the proposal included placing a neighbourhood centre on a site previously occupied by post-war, temporary bungalows. It would contain twenty shops, a library, a pub, a licensed club, a petrol station, a play area, an old people's home, a community centre, a clinic, church and youth centre, alongside which would be three twelve storey blocks. Multi-storey housing became for Burns a 'focus point' in newly developed neighbourhoods, partly described in planning documents as aesthetic devices, partly as a means of boosting density levels in a confined residential area.¹⁷⁰ But Newcastle's planners also deployed pre-existing working class housing areas in their definitions of territorial community areas. Shieldfield in the centre of Newcastle, Walker, Byker and other areas, were all used as ordering devices for definitions of community sizes and the reorganisation of their population's demographic status.

By the 1960s Newcastle's planning strategies did seem to offer the opportunity to embrace a level of resident participation in local neighbourhoods. Slum dwellers due for re-housing were nevertheless tarnished by their origins in the city's worst housing areas. Technocratic council officers such as the City Planner Wilfred Burns accorded various 'housing classes' with different levels of participatory influence. Thus in a document, *Towards a New Housing Policy* (1962) Burns was distinctly selective about the level of consultation involved in modernising urban neighbourhoods.¹⁷¹ He suggested that

residents in 'conservation areas' such as Jesmond and Heaton, who were mostly middle class homeowners, would be invited to comment on their local redevelopments and would be encouraged to set up voluntary conservation societies.¹⁷² In the category 'revitalisation areas' that included large parts of the city's west end, purely technical issues dominated and no consultation was proposed. Clearances and major modernisation would be needed here. Technical solutions would facilitate social cohesion, happiness for the majority and thus harmonious community building. An environmental determinist discourse informed Burns' planning projects:

If weight is given simply to the achievement of modern standards of housing it may well be that only a small amount of revitalisation should be done. If much weight is attached to the social cohesion of an area, most of the property outside slum clearance areas would be revitalised. It is suggested that somewhere between these two alternatives would give the greatest measure of choice for people....¹⁷³

Thus an unspecified measure of 'choice' was acceptable, but consultation less so: it is maybe not surprising that Newcastle was to experience tenant protests a few years later.

The sociological critique of the neighbourhood unit idea

Newcastle planners and administrators continued to display a paternalistic relationship towards their working class citizens.¹⁷⁴ Even if the civic commitment to improve the urban environment of the city seemed unquestionable there were signs that the neighbourhood concept employed by Newcastle's planners was mainly used as a technical ordering device, rather than reflecting the actual needs of social groups in the individual housing areas. By making the term almost 'scientific' in its application, it seemed in the end to reduce the sense of citizenship in the local population.¹⁷⁵ Yet Wilfred Burns still claimed to involve citizens in the planning of Newcastle, by providing information through displays of three-dimensional models of urban plans in shop windows, public meetings in local areas, where a civil servant would explain the implications of planning. Indeed he even suggested that a forum existed for residents to question and air their views to Town Planning Committee members during the 1960s - probably alluding to the meetings on the Compulsory Purchase Order declarations in the West and East ends of the city.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately though, the Town Planning Committee and the elected City Council took the ultimate planning decisions. Indeed, as will be shown in

chapter 5, it is questionable to what extent this seemingly democratic process was sincerely adhered to.

Although a technocratic planner such as Wilfred Burns in Newcastle cited sociological studies in his research on planning processes there are signs that his selection ignored studies that were critical of pre-conceived notions of designed community formations. Early studies such as Mass Observation's work on war-time working class household attitudes, Ruth Glass' research for the *Middlesbrough Plan*, and the later work by the sociologist Dennis Chapman on the relationship between social status and the home, had alerted architects and planners to the problem of understanding the actual requirements of people in relation to their homes and housing areas during the 1950s.¹⁷⁷ Some sociologists were fully aware that planners employed a conceptual apparatus of neighbourhoods that became naturalised as they imprinted cities with their designed community systems. In the mid-1950s community research was taking shape to consider these issues in empirical fieldwork.¹⁷⁸ As Chapman suggested: architects had no sociological research to enhance their work, designs were based either on the architect's personal experience or on the fashions of their profession. Conversely, tenants had little influence on the designs of their dwellings.¹⁷⁹ Indeed during this period critical questions were raised about the taken-for-granted concept of the neighbourhood ideal.

For some there was nothing obvious in the relationship between the physical unit of the neighbourhood and the community relations deemed inherent in it. Norman Dennis' remarks on the problem of sustaining a community feeling purely at the level of spatial inter-action are pertinent. Far more significant for cohesion was the social-system community in which class levels and shared memories and experiences were influential factors.¹⁸⁰ A factor in the further diversification within neighbourhoods was housing allocation policies. It was an example of an administrative expedient, which might show unintended, socially disruptive consequences. But Dennis' overall concern with the neighbourhood unit was its proponents' ideological position:

The political doctrines which are associated with the neighbourhood ideology are those which talk particularly of the inherent wisdom, harmony, and integrity, of the community. In the science of human behaviour, the neighbourhood ideology is fed by those schools which equate 'maturity' etc. with competence in inter-personal relationships. All these views tend to be highly acceptable, because the

reality component in each is reinforced by the fact that they can easily be used to justify the existing order of things, and to minimise the view that difference, conflict, and the desire for change, are essentially unrealistic and pathological phenomena.¹⁸¹

Therefore, from the view of the municipal planner, his (for it was almost invariable a man) implicit intentions were more likely to be the stabilisation and ordering of the city's social life. The question for Dennis became: in how far was it 'desirable' to create material environments facilitating community. For what reason or on what basis did a certain kind of knowledge of the neighbourhood seem so compelling?¹⁸²

In turning to the case of Newcastle such a question of reflection never arose to stir the city's planners. Indeed notions of the existence of community continued to be strong threads in the discourse of housing and urban management in Newcastle City Council as it faced changes and challenges from tenants and residents. Little explicit reference to democratic life in these communities were made. 'Community' came to stand for harmonious ways of living rather than space for participation and discussion. It was a concept with Utopian connotations, an ideal to be desired, resting variously in the past in the early post-war plans or the future, when the vision was coloured by technical solutions.

Comparative Implications

The comparison has shown some distinct differences in approach to the management of social housing in the two cities. It is striking that the centralised control of social housing by Newcastle Council often led to an emphasis on explicit official social control that affected the relationship the Council landlord had with its tenants. There were of course areas of freedom for tenants in their housing lives: they managed their domestic matters and gardens, and were encouraged to foster a social life within their communities and neighbourhoods. To what extent they did this is difficult to measure and it has been suggested that many were concerned mostly with their private affairs. But increasing amounts of material produced by local residents and tenant's associations during the 1960s suggests that the feelings of tenants were particularly aroused by radical Council intervention that disrupted their domestic quietude – such as during slum clearances and revitalisation in urban renewal areas. We will return to tenant's participatory tactics in Chapter 5.

Danish social housing associations on the other hand were mediators in a culture of housing financed by the state and local government. They were managed through processes that anchored them firmly in the local housing areas, through a combination of administration and the democratic delegation of responsibility for the associations' authority. Few British observers attempted to penetrate the system to understand it thoroughly, beyond admiring the material result, Danish domestic architecture. But those who did seemed impressed that its devolved procedures provided a compromise that might be considered for emulation in Britain:

It is impossible to compare the Danish housing society and the British building society in its modern form, but the housing society is a model which might well be followed voluntarily by groups of local authorities, who could pool their needs and form a co-operative group to have these needs fulfilled with the greatest possible responsibility thrown to the managing architect. Such a reform could never be realised unless the Ministries concerned were willing to support it, but it might result in devolution of responsibility, which would cut out much of the over-centralised administration of which so many complaints are heard.¹⁸³

However it has been shown that many British cities, including Newcastle, resisted this call for a decentralised organisational form, which Professor Bowen thought a useful alternative to local authority housing provision.¹⁸⁴ No central entity in Danish social housing associations seemed to be a landlord and consequently no-one was a tenant - residents were 'mortgagors' with stakes in their housing. This appeared to eminently facilitate a good design culture as well as taking care of the social welfare of poorer groups.¹⁸⁵ But what Bowen, the architectural reformer, did not notice was the lower level administrative procedures that locally affected the actual building of the houses. The role of architects remained pre-eminent in the mind of a British housing observer studied in the technical aspects of housing provision.¹⁸⁶ Yet it was the small-scale local management of Denmark's social housing associations that set it on its trajectory of a democratic and egalitarian housing system.

The chapter has concentrated on the role of public administration in the provision of housing. Some allusions have been made to the social relationships between managers and residents of social housing. Ultimately, the dynamically structuring relationship between the Danish local authority and its social housing associations is the key

difference to the centralised housing provision of Newcastle. British commentators noticed that Danish and Scandinavian domestic architecture and its formation within a uniquely Danish form of housing management were deeply connected (the issue of representing housing and planning will be discussed in the next chapter).¹⁸⁷ Indeed observers of Danish politics have continued to note the historical importance of housing associations to the country's political culture.¹⁸⁸ It is this difference that conferred a cultural dimension to Danish social housing, lying between state and municipal policies and the everyday life of local housing areas. This function of Danish social housing associations in civil society has led historians to attach more weight to the national policies than the practices of Danish housing associations, leading to conclusions that they were merely the service providers of state policy.¹⁸⁹ However this chapter shows that the service housing associations provided facilitated a different, yet significant, process of mediation between local government and its citizens in the local area, than the professional housing practice performed within the British housing authority. In order to understand how the two housing authorities set about communicating with large groups of residents and tenants in Århus and Newcastle it is useful to look at the official discourse of exhibitions and housing displays. The next chapter will examine particular exhibition events to consider key housing messages dominant in the two cities.

Århus Council turned to the local long-term management of its social housing through housing associations, acting as a regulative body responsible for the distribution of state and municipal housing subsidies. Despite their assertions that might suggest otherwise, Århusian social housing associations in practice did not work as fully autonomous organisations, but relied heavily on Council and state approvals for their projects, as well as being subject to validation of their individual policies. However there was some degree of variation in the individual forms of organisation and the level of democratic administration made possible for housing association residents. And so Århusian social housing associations played a significant role as intermediaries in housing provision beyond local government, radically reducing the scale of individual management units in comparison with the large stock of housing managed by Newcastle Council. Their administrative structure and the policy of local democratic processes held the potential for a type of involvement by residents very different from the British.

Whereas a consistently strong social democratic majority led Århus Council from 1917 to 1970 (with a brief interlude immediately after WWII), Newcastle Council was subject to shifts in party political control in the same period. Since the nineteenth century property owning ratepayers had asserted pressure on the Council to restrict unnecessary expenditure that might potentially raise local taxes, the rates.¹⁹⁰ The issue of rates continued to feature in defensive debates within the Council during the post-war period and seems to have functioned as a tactical effort to put a brake on more costly housing developments. The Danish social democratic interest in social housing is from a labour historian's perspective inevitable.¹⁹¹ The party that represented the working classes was optimally suited to become the initiator of housing reforms aimed at sustaining working class ways of life. Indeed early pre-war Danish social democracy had aimed at gradualist social reforms rather than following radical socialist traditions.¹⁹² When individual housing associations represented themselves in the traditional co-operative form as inclusive and apolitical, open to a wide range of residents, they asserted their openness to reformist democratic processes in providing social welfare housing, without the party political connections.¹⁹³ And yet such an inclusive democratic model early on nevertheless lay so close to social democratic values as to be almost indistinguishable from them.

The spatial dimension of housing in the urban areas of Newcastle and Århus shows the diverse and diverging concerns held by urban managers in the two cities. These differences in the actual physical spaces of the cities were based on differences in geographical, historical and political spatial relations. But within the planning models deployed by local urban planners there was at the national as well as the local level, shared aspects which, even if held in common, diverged locally, mainly through pragmatic modifications. The Newcastle and Århus town plans of the 1950s and 1960s show how local contingency and administrative interests ordered local urban space, in particular the social housing areas of the two cities. The built environment in the two cities appeared distinctly different, both due to the inherited housing systems passed down since the late nineteenth century and the meanings attached to multi-storey living in the two cities.¹⁹⁴ For now it is sufficient to repeat the point that flats - especially in the form of socially rented accommodation - was the generally accepted norm in Århus, whereas Newcastle seems to have struggled with a clear definition of its need for flats.

Hence the early proposal to reduce the quantity of flats, whilst later objectives, supported by compelling state subsidies saw the multi-storey block as both an aesthetic device and a means to boost housing figures, partly in an effort to modernise the housing stock and furnish tenants with re-housing areas in cases where they were displaced through slum clearance.

Århusian housing associations were both landlords and attended to particular local social needs of their tenants. They also concerned themselves with neighbourhood relations, but left social welfare support to local and national government. They did attempt to modify resident social behaviour through local house rules, and protected their property through strict clauses as to the decoration of flats. Deposits could be withdrawn, or repaid in significantly reduced amounts, when residents moved out, to pay for re-decoration. Clearly an incentive existed for residents to maintain a dwelling to the highest standard possible, or to comply with housing association criteria set for the decoration of the flat. Indeed this pressure and inhibition on residents' freedom in their home was cause for complaint in later decades. On the other hand housing associations accepted their role in actively facilitating community building through the provision of cultural activities. Newcastle's adoption of centralised controlling mechanisms by comparison felt paternalistic and regulated from above, excluding the voice of tenants in the housing system, as will be seen in the next chapter, which considers some key messages on housing projected by the housing authorities in both cities. Here social activities in the neighbourhoods were organised by tenants associations beyond the remit of the housing authority.

Tenant conduct can in other ways illustrate the difference in management strategies. When Danish tenants in the private sector established an official body to advise on legal matters, and democratic procedures were instituted in local housing departments to manage repairs and localised neighbourhood problems, the right to continuous local intervention by a keenly engaged associational culture was recognised. A later chapter will consider whether the majority of residents partook in such opportunities for democratic participation. In Newcastle it is apparent that tenant involvement was inhibited by the central control of the housing authority. Tenants might assemble into local groups in order to initiate local social and cultural activities. But they also

complained and pointed out shortcomings of their housing estates to the housing authority. There was no clear line of communication between the lived experience of tenants and the bureaucratic processes of local authority's management of housing areas. Such groups may only have existed for a short time due to their issues-based nature, since the Council would eventually deal with shortcomings in the environment.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand tenants also formed constructive community associations that requested land for meeting halls and sites to use for small events and sports, although it is unclear how stable or long-lasting these associations were.

- ¹ Indenrigsministeriets Byggeudvalg af 1940, *Det fremtidige boligbyggeri*, Cph.: Indenrigsministeriet, 1945; Carsten Frimand, At bygge et bedre samfund. Den boligpolitiske debat om boligen 1945-55, *Arbejderhistorie*, 1999, no. 1; Lind and Møller (1994) cit. p.125-126, Erik Nygaard, *Tag over hovedet*, Cph.: Arkitektens Forlag, 1984; Henrik Christoffersen, *Dansk velfærds politik efter 1945*, Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1984, p.40; Anne Power, *Hovels to High Rise, State housing in Europe since 1870*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.260, Michael Harloe, et al, *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe & America*, London: Blackwell, 1995, p.295
- ² Leif Dehnitz, *En understrøm af flygtninge i Århus efter besættelsen*, Århus: Århus kommunes Biblioteker, 1995
- ³ This was a process of relocating the city's population stemming from policies reaching back to the 18th century, which were abandoned later in the decade. Ib Gejl, Uden hus og hjem i Århus, in Vagn Dybdahl, *Hus og hjem i Århus*, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1977, p.64. Århus Byråds Forhandlinger, 29.11.45
- ⁴ Århus Byråds Forhandlinger 29.11.45
- ⁵ Århus Byråds Forhandlinger 21.08.47, Mayor Unmack Larsen: '.....at kommunerne har pligt til at skaffe beboelsesmuligheder til de familieforsørgere, der er blevet boligløse uden egen skyld.'
- ⁶ Henrik Fode, Byens styre, in Ib Gejl (ed.) *Århus. Byens historie, 1870-1945*, vol. 3, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1998, p.315
- ⁷ Århus Kommunes Statistiske Kontor, *Økonomiske og Statistiske Meddelelser 1944: Boligbyggeriet i Århus Kommune 1805-1944*, Århus: Århus Kommune, 1945 [transl. Århus Council Statistical Office, *Economic and Statistical reports 1944: housing in the municipality of Århus 1805-1944*]
- ⁸ The housing association A/B Højbo Committee Meeting Minutes 27.12.55; Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, *Borgere i byens råd*, Århus: Universitetsforlaget i Århus, 1968, p.13-16
- ⁹ Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, *op. cit.*, p.16-19
- ¹⁰ Erhvervsarkivet: Århus Kommunes Arkiv, Journalsag 1504-1961
- ¹¹ Århus Boligkommission, *Beretning 1949*, Århus: Boligkommissionen, 1949; Erhvervsarkivet: Unmack Larsens Arkiv, Box 4, *Kommunale Institutioner*. Contains confidential reports on the behaviour, social welfare and housing problems of homeless families.
- ¹² Arbejderbo, *Arbejderbo. Arbejderbevægelsens Organisation til fremme af Almennyttigt Boligbyggeri 1941-1966*, Cph.: Arbejderbo, 1966
- ¹³ Letters exchanged between Unmack Larsen and Kjærboell, Ministry of Housing, May 1955- June 1956; Erhvervsarkivet: Århus Kommunes Arkiv Journalsag, 545-1963
- ¹⁴ A/B Højbo Committee Meeting Minutes 27.12.55
- ¹⁵ Danish Social Democratic politicians in the post-war period welcomed the Beveridge Report that set in motion the post-war expansion of the British welfare state. Finneman *op. cit.*, p. 270-271. Those active in the Danish housing movement expressed a radical view, deploying a comparison with the British Labour Party, that only full public ownership of housing – without necessarily completely nationalising the construction industry - would enable a clear location of responsibilities for the social welfare of housing. Speech by Otto Krabbe, *Befolkningen og de boligpolitiske problemer*, transcribed in *Boligen* 1958, no. 3-4, p.55
- ¹⁶ Unmack Larsens Arkiv, Box 5. It was found that the homeless displayed a level of nomadic behaviour, moving whenever they ran out of credit in their local area. In 1955 a small group of families were still in temporary barrack shelters. Furthermore a large proportion of them were known to the police. The homeless lived in temporary barrack well into the 1950s. Only by the mid 1950s did the number of families drop below 200. See Engell, *op. cit.*, p.88
- ¹⁷ Århus Byråds Forhandlinger, 26.08.48
- ¹⁸ Århus Council, *Indret en Taglejlighed – en nyttig Samfundsgerning*, Århus: Stadsarkitektens Kontor, 1946
- ¹⁹ Rolf Engell, Levevilkårene, in Ib Gejl (ed.), *Århus. Byens historie, 1870-1945*, vol. 3, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1998, p.87

Århus Council imported small family houses from Finland as well as recycled a collection of temporary houses from a Jutish fishing village for the city's residents. The Finnish wooden houses were built for sale on rural land on the northern periphery of the city. 122 were imported and were later owned by a mixture of occupational groups from the working classes who took great pride in their area. See A. Mogensen, Århus Kommunes bolignødsbyggeri, *Arkitektens Ugehæfte*, 1948, 50, p.81-82; Peter Deleuran (ed.), *Finnebrædder og Fællesskab*, Århus: Finnebyens Boggruppe, 1998, p.19-33

²⁰ Unmack Larsen, Socialfilantropisk boligbyggeri i Århus, *Byggeindustrien*, 25. August, 1954, p. 279-282

²¹ AAB (1969), op. cit., p.12

²² Erhvervsarkivet: Borgmester Unmack Larsens Arkiv, Box 5.

²³ Unmack Larsen, op. cit. p.282

²⁴ Esbjørn Hiort, *Housing in Denmark since 1930*, London: The Architectural Press, 1952, p. 33

²⁵ Plans in Erhvervsarkivet: Århus Kommunes Arkiv Journalsag, 1035-1947

²⁶ Århus Byråds Forhandlinger 08.01.48

²⁷ Erhvervsarkivet: Århus Kommunes Arkiv Journalsag, 1035-1947 contains a copy of this letter.

²⁸ I.C. Sørensen and Kai Blicher in Århus Byråds Forhandlinger 21.08.47, p.218-221

²⁹ Århus Byråds Forhandlinger 08.01.48

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Jens Otto Krag, *Kooperationen, Fremtiden og Planøkonomien*, Cph.: Det Kooperative Fællesforbund i Danmark, n.d.

³² Although his key example was retail co-operation housing associations may be assumed to be included in these thoughts.

³³ Social Demokratiet, *Fremtidens Danmark*, Cph.: Social Demokratisk Forbund, 1945; Statens Byggeforsknings institut, *Årsberetning for Finansåret 1947-48*, Hørsholm: SBI, 1949

³⁴ Frimand (1999) op. cit. p. 16-17

³⁵ Niels Ole Finneman, *I broderskabets ånd. Den socialdemokratiske arbejderbevægelses idéhistorie 1871-1977*, Cph.: Gyldendal, 1985, p.291

³⁶ Klaus Petersen, Legitimität und Krise. *Die Geschichte des Dänischen Wohlfahrtsstaates 1945-1973*, Berlin: Verlag Arno Spitz, 1998, p.50-61 – on the role of a strongly state-managed planning and rationalisation process of Danish industrial society as proposed by the post-war Social Democratic Party. This immediate post-war period is also the time of the first formulation of a Danish welfare state.

³⁷ Indenrigsministeriets Byggeudvalg af 1940, op. cit., p. 134-139 Made it clear that housing associations would be primary providers of social housing.

³⁸ Århus, Boligkommissionen, *Beretning*, Århus: Århus Kommune, 1949

³⁹ Indenrigsministeriets Byggeudvalg af 1940, op. cit., Appendix 14, p.127

⁴⁰ *Boligen*, 1960, p. 223

⁴¹ Århus Byråds Forhandlinger 20.04.50. The department, De Studerendes Hus (Students' House), was a distinct section of the "Ringgaarden" housing association (36 flats and 16 rooms for poorer couples and students). Boligforeningen "Ringgaarden", Committee Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 03.03.54 – in total the association built three housing areas for students in 1953, 1957 and 1962-63, *Ringgaarden – en almennyttig boligforening 1938-50-1988*, Århus: Ringgaarden, 1988

⁴² This is what is described in AAB, *Vi Bygger selv*, 1944, and in *Boligforeningen Højbo 1942-1992 50*, Århus: Højbo, 1992 – yet it is rarely discussed by historians of Danish social housing associations for the period before 1970. Olaf Lind and Jonas Møller, *Boligfolk, folkebolig. Politik og praksis i boligbevægelsens historie*, Cph.: Boligselskabernes Landsforening, 1994

⁴³ AAB *Jubilæumsskrift 1919-1994*, Århus; AAB, 1994

⁴⁴ *Ringgaarden – en almennyttig boligforening, 1938 – 50- 1988* shows that some of its early sections contained only 40 flats, while later system built housing areas were much bigger with several hundred households.

⁴⁵ There is no evidence of waiting list numbers for individual housing associations, neither is there a record of waiting lists within Århus Council. However the municipal Housing Office was concerned with housing the homeless.

- ⁴⁶ Archive in Andelsboligforeningen Højbo: Det Sociale Boligbyggeri, Scrapbook and Committee Minute Book (1942); *Demokraten*, 01.07.42
- ⁴⁷ *Boligen*, 1966, p.474
- ⁴⁸ AAB, 1919-1969, Århus: AAB, 1969, op. cit., p.26-27
- ⁴⁹ Group interview with women who had been housewives in Det Sociale Boligbyggeri's first housing project, 30.05.2001 – Most had had low grade unskilled positions as domestic cleaners to supplement the family income. These women did not bother to go to general meetings; they were mostly concerned about the care of their families.
- ⁵⁰ Boligforeningen Højbo's archive, Lejerforeningen 'Solbakken' Forhandlingsprotokol, 26.01.45, 07.05.47, 20.05.48
- ⁵¹ *Vesterbos Medlemsblad*, nr.11 Nov. 1964
- ⁵² Vesterbo's membership newsletter continued this message to distinguish residents in housing associations from tenants in private renting. Residents in housing associations shared a collective ownership of their housing supporting a more egalitarian housing culture than the private market could maintain. Ed., *Attentat mod boligforeningstanken*, *Boligen*, 1964, p.251
- ⁵³ Carsten Brønden Poulsen and Knud Knudsen, *Lejerkamp – lejerorganisering, Årbog for arbejderbevægelsens historie, Tema Arbejderen og boligen*, 1984 (4), p.135
- ⁵⁴ Århus Lejerforening, *Forhandlingsbog* (Minutebook) 1927-1952, various cases.
- ⁵⁵ For a contemporary statement by a communist writer and architect on the housing situation see Edvard Heiberg, *2 Værelser straks*, Copenhagen: Monde, 1935; Poulsen, op. cit., p.141
- ⁵⁶ Århus Lejerforening archive, *Forhandlingsprotokol* 1953-1969, 12.11.53; Solbakkens Lejerforening, *forhandlingsprotokol*, 1945-48 shows that residents in housing run by Det Sociale Boligbyggeri were keen to engage with the management of their housing area
- ⁵⁷ AAB (1944), op. cit., n.p.
- ⁵⁸ An early Chair of the Aabyhøj Boligforening was described as a 'Warrior for the housing cause' in a recent anniversary publication. Lars Meldgaard, *En boligforening - og dens mennesker*, Århus: Aabyhøj Boligforening, 1992, p.33-38, it is his biographical story that is summarised in the following section.
- ⁵⁹ Leif Tang, *Befolkningen og de boligpolitiske problemer*, in *Boligen*, 1953, 4-5, p.66
- ⁶⁰ See Aabyhøj boligforening, *ibid.*; Vesterbo 1946-1996 narrates the history of the fledgling housing association as it grew and became established, through busy years of 'hectic' construction work. General histories of local activities of housing associations are described as events enveloped in work, administration and negotiations. *Ringgaarden – en almennyttig boligforening* op. cit. 10-25
- ⁶¹ The notion of 'housing people' (*boligfolk*) has been incorporated into the title of a history of the Danish housing movement: *Boligfolk – folkebolig. Politik og praksis i boligbevægelsens historie* by Jonas Møller and Olaf Lind, Cph.: Boligselskabernes Landsforening, 1994
- ⁶² L. Meldgaard, op. cit., p.32
- ⁶³ The housing association Det Sociale Boligbyggeri had only a single residents' representative on its committee. Its housing project, the Vorrevang set of system built flats were built in 1957 but soon proved to have been constructed with insufficient experience of such construction methods. By 1962 cracks were appearing in the façade units, residents were experiencing problems with damp and defective hand basins. The resident's association protested at the lack of influence in the housing association and pointed out alleged injustices in the management of the organisation. See e.g. BT, 14.06.1962, *Århus Ekko*, Feb. 1936 both in AAB's archive, *Scrapbook Vol. 4*, 1962-1967, Erhvervsarkivet.
- ⁶⁴ Vesterbo Boligforening, *Forhandlingsprotokol*, 21.09.66. By this time system built flats were built in large housing areas, the suburbs clearly wanted to keep out additional social problems.
- ⁶⁵ *Vesterbos Medlemsblad*, Feb. 1953, no. 2: Residents were reminded that their status was not subject to the policies for tenants in private lets, but that they had the right to become involved in the co-operative organization that was their housing association. They shared in the ownership of the property and it would be better if the residents did not confine themselves to the privacy of their home, but contributed to the life of the association.

⁶⁶ *Vesterbos medlemsblad* 05.05.53 featured articles on furnishing the home, while twenty years later *Boligens A, B, Z* published to be consulted by residents in new flats included details on how to stock cleaning cupboards, keeping the flat clean, and lay out furniture, as well as house rules and information on general amenities.

⁶⁷ Erhvervsarkivet, AAB archive, *Scrap book* vol. 2, 15.06.48, Brabrand Boligforening, *Skræppebladet*, no. 1, March 1970

⁶⁸ AAB *ibid.* 'Fællesskabet og en praktisk betonet samhørsfølelse har skabt en charmerende hygge..' – 'The fellowship and a practical sense of togetherness has created a charming sense of comfort.'

⁶⁹ P. Michelsen, *Rejsegilde i Danmark. Arbejdsfest og håndværksskik*, Cph.: National Museet, 1983

⁷⁰ Erhvervsarkivet, AAB, *Scrap book* vol.2: press cuttings (no source): Sept. 1951 (*rejsegilde* at Skovvangsparken); Århus Stiftstidende 22.12.64: Olaf Rudesvej; ÅS 26.01.67: Klostervangen

⁷¹ M. Frantzén and E. Sandstedt, *Grannskap och stadsplanering - Om stat och byggande i efterkrigstidens Sverige*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Sociologica Upsaliensia. 17,1981. Århusian architects, private construction entrepreneurs and social housing providers undertook annual study visits to European urban reconstruction areas, including prestigious social housing projects such as Guldheden near Gothenburg, Coventry, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, see ch. 6.

⁷² Arne Gaardmand, *Dansk byplanlægning 1938-1992*, Cph., Arkitektens Forlag, 1993, p.38-39

⁷³ In the 1950s and 1960s the different parties expressed their position in the *Byplan* town planning journal. See e.g. Bernhard Jensen, Foregangsby eller rentier. Om udviklingen i Århusområdet, *Byplan*, 1960, 65, p. 2-7; Editor,'s comment on Århus, Århusproblemet. Et forslag fra Århus amtsråd og forstadssognerådene ved Århus, *Byplan*, 1960, 65, p.34-43; Bernhard Jensen, Kommunalpolitikere og teknikere, *Byplan*, 1964, 95, p.7-8

⁷⁴ Bo Larsson, and Ole Thomassen, Urban Planning in Denmark, in Thomas Hall, *Planning and Urban Growth in the Nordic Countries*, London: E & FN Spon, 1991

⁷⁵ Stor-Århuskommisionen, *Egnsplan for Stor-Århus*, Århus: 1954, p. 61

⁷⁶ *Egnsplan for Stor-Århus*, 1954, p.17:

Ved valget af den ideelle bystørrelse vil økonomiske, sociologiske, æstetiske, etiske og tekniske forhold spille ind, og det vil være uhyre vanskeligt at veje de forskellige faktorer mod hinanden. I hvert fald vil der kun blive tale om en rent subjektiv bedømmelse.

⁷⁷ B. Jensen, *op. cit.*, p.7-8

⁷⁸ B. Jensen, *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Egnsplan for Stor-Århus*, *op. cit.*, p.33

⁸⁰ *Egnsplan for Stor-Århus*, *op. cit.*, p.46

⁸¹ Vesterbo Boligforening, *Forhandlingsprotokol*, 21.09.66.

⁸² On the neighbourhood unit see, M. Glendinning and S. Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1996, Alison Ravetz, *Remaking Cities*, Croom Helm, 1980, 51-52; N.M. Day, *The Role of the Architect in Post-War State Housing. A case study of the housing work of the London County Council, 1939-1956*, Unpublished Ph.D., Warwick University, 1983, p.306

⁸³ Århus Stadsarkitektens Kontor, Manuscript on recently built social housing areas, 1955, Unmack Larsens Arkiv, Erhvervsarkivet

⁸⁴ Bent Røgind, Konkurrencen om en bebyggelses- og gadeplan for arealet "Langenæs" i Århus, *Byplan*, 1950, (8), p.107

⁸⁵ For a definition and history of the Danish *kollektivhus* see Hans Erling Langkilde, *Kollektivhuset – en boligforms udvikling i dansk arkitektur*, Cph.: Dansk Videnskabs Forlag, 1970

⁸⁶ Theodor Geiger was sacked as a Communist from Braunschweig University by the Nazis and fled to Denmark in 1938. He had to escape to Sweden again during the German occupation of Denmark and returned to Århus after the war, where he worked until his early death in 1952. *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopedie*, vol. 3, Munich: K.G. Law, 1996

⁸⁷ *Referat af det 15. Danske Byplanmøde*, Århus 21.-22. Maj 1948, in Erhvervsarkivet: Unmack Larsens Arkiv

⁸⁸ *Op. cit.* p.2

⁸⁹ Lewis Mumford's book, *The Culture of Cities* was translated into Swedish in 1942 as *Stadskultur*. L. Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1945 (1938)

⁹⁰ A retrospective, or at least romantic view of housing was presented in an angry response to Geiger by the artist Asger Jorn (member of the COBRA group). Geiger was given space to defend his ideas in *Arkitekten*, 1948, 50, p.195

⁹¹ The benefits of British community centres had been discussed in a recent governmental report by Edvard Heiberg, in *Indenrigsministeriets Byggeudvalg af 1940*, op. cit., p.110-126

⁹² Th. Geiger, op. cit., p.23

⁹³ Two key influential, but opposing, thinkers on Danish democracy in the post-war years, Hal Koch and Alf Ross, set the tone of the debate. The influential social democratic theologian, Hal Koch, was concerned about the dangers of a mass public (as experienced in the national socialist system of the Third Reich). His model saw democracy as continuous open debate, of a democratic way of life encompassing all levels of culture and society – culture in this sense signifying the cultivation of human society. The media lay dangerously in the area of mass consumption and might lead to manipulation rather than open dialogue. See Hal Koch, *Hvad er demokrati?*, Cph.: Gyldendal, 1991 (1945) – Alf Ross on the other hand saw democracy carried through sound institutional practices: extensive and efficient parliamentary processes. Niels Ole Finneman, op. cit., p.337

⁹⁴ Th. Geiger, *Arkitekten*, 1948, (50), p.195

⁹⁵ E. Nygaard, op. cit., p.58-59

⁹⁶ Th. Geiger, *Soziale Umschichtung in einer dänischen Mittelstadt*, *Acta Jutlandica*, Århus, 1951, xxiii

⁹⁷ Op. cit., p.109-112

Ser man f.eks. på en borger i forstaden Åbyhøj ved Århus, føler han sig dels som borger i Åbyhøj, dels som borger i Storårrhus, dels vel som jyde og dels som dansker, og det synes naturligt, at der findes dertil svarende organer, hvor han direkte kan gøre sin indflydelse, sin stemme gældende.

E. Tjørnehøj, Municipal Architect, in *Referat af det 15. Danske Byplanmøde*, Århus 21.-22. May 1948, p.12

⁹⁹ Council architects were engaged in military service, thus reducing resources. See NCCM 18.04.45 for a discussion of the financial incentives considered to encourage architects to Newcastle, as the Council was concerned about inter-authority competition for staff. G. Kenyon, *Housing Report*, Newcastle: 1955

¹⁰⁰ NCCM 18.10.1950

¹⁰¹ MD/NC/115/2 21.01.54

¹⁰² MD/NC/115/2 23.12.54

¹⁰³ *Evening Chronicle*, 08.11.46

¹⁰⁴ A. Ravetz (1983), op. cit., ch.1

¹⁰⁵ PRO HLG 101/798 on the future of North East Housing Association (NEHA): The NEHA did not build in Newcastle in the immediate post-war period, and its neighbouring municipalities as well as members of the Northern Housing Council were equally resistant to accepting housing associations as complementary providers of social housing. *Evening Chronicle* 19.12.1942. At a Durham housing conference it was made clear by the County's municipal delegates that they were not prepared to 'favour' housing provision by other bodies – there is nothing in the sources to suggest Newcastle Council disagreed with this statement.

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of the role of architects and building interests in state housing of Britain see Patrick Dunleavy, *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain 1945-1975, A Study of Corporate Power, and Professional Influence in the Welfare State*, London: Clarendon Press, 1981

¹⁰⁷ T.D. Smith and J. Eagles, *Peril in the City. The Appalling Story of Newcastle's Housing Tragedy*, Newcastle: Newcastle Labour Party, 1955

¹⁰⁸ The requirement was for the architect to be a Fellow or Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects. NCCM 02.04.47. The re-organisation of the architect's services coincided with the retirement of the previous City Architect in 1946. MD/NC/106/9 31.20.46

¹⁰⁹ Ministry of Health Guidelines advised the appointment of professional architects in municipalities. George Kenyon would have drawn on the design proposals for early post-war

council housing such as that built on the Montagu Estate from the Dudley Committee's publications. Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *Design of Dwellings*, London: HMSO, 1944

¹¹⁰ Hercombe and Morris, entry on George Kenyon in the Biographical Catalogue, Newcastle Central Library, Local Studies Collection,

¹¹¹ Accounts of the role of the municipal architect can be found in, Miles Glendinning and S. Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1996; N.M. Day, *ibid.*; P. Malpass, Professionalism and the role of architects in local authority housing, *RIBA Journal*, June, 1975

¹¹² NCCM 03.03.54

¹¹³ The Council voted against funding conference visits undertaken by the City Architect, since professional development should be undertaken in any case. NCCM 17.12.52

¹¹⁴ For a detailed discussion of this problem in the 1960s see Muthesius and Glendinning, *op. cit.*, ch.22 *passim*. The case of the Noble Street flats in Newcastle makes it clear that this had been a problem in the 1950s. MD/NC/106/10 31.03.49

¹¹⁵ NCCM 03.03.54, 17.03.54, 07.04.54

¹¹⁶ BCDP, *Slums on the Drawing Board*, Newcastle: BCDP, 1978

¹¹⁷ PRO HLG/101/593 Correspondence from Miss M Empson, Ministry of Health, 11.02.46

¹¹⁸ NCCM 21.09.49

¹¹⁹ A. Power (1987) p. 28-33, A. Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture. The history of a social experiment*, London: Routledge, 2001, p.112-113

¹²⁰ MD/NC/106/9 04.04.46 A letter from the Institute of Housing inviting the Housing Committee to collaborate on staff training was ignored.

¹²¹ MD/NC/115/2 13.10.55: on the difficulties of recruiting rent collectors and the pay scale for those with or without a certificate of education.

¹²² G. Kenyon, *Housing Report*, Newcastle: Housing Committee 1955; Census 1961, Table 15, p.75

¹²³ G. King, *General Report on Housing Management*, Housing Management Committee, Newcastle: 1960, p.2; NCCM 21.11.51

¹²⁴ Ravetz (2001), *op. cit.*, p.114 mentions two factors that seemed to lower the status of housing management: the problem of housing being specifically for the working class, and that it 'only' took responsibility for housekeeping. Newcastle by-passed the housekeeping factor by rarely considering domestic conditions beyond the slums, since this could be included in the technical solutions of clearance and urban development under the rubric of public health, rather than cultural improvement in the private home environment (as took place in Århus).

¹²⁵ Examples can be found in the activities of the Sanitary Committee's work in 1902-03 see previous chapter and e.g. MD/NC/98/9 Sanitary Committee on the work of women Health Visitors visiting tenements 19.10.1902; on the need for single and double room tenements in Newcastle, 06.04.1903; on the need for single men's and women's model lodgings 20.04.1903.

¹²⁶ NCCM 21.11.51, p.580-581

¹²⁷ Housing Management Sub-Committee, *Residential Qualification*, London: MHLG, 1955; MD/NC/115/2 10.08.55

¹²⁸ NCCM 19.12.51, report from the Housing Management Committee by Mr Henderson

¹²⁹ MD/NC/106/9 19.08.46

¹³⁰ NCCM 23.10.52

¹³¹ NCCM 23.01.52

¹³² NCCM 23.01.52

¹³³ NCCM, 21.10.53

¹³⁴ NCCM 21.10.53

¹³⁵ F.J. Miller et al., *Growing up in Newcastle upon Tyne*, London: The Nuffield Foundation, 1960; see also Lorna C. Goldsmith, *The Problem of 'Problem Families': Managing housing and tenants in Newcastle in the 1960s*, paper given at the conference Meeting the 'Other,' Charles University, 11 September 2002

¹³⁶ NCCM 04.03.53

¹³⁷ In the mid 1950s for example houses on Slatyford Lane revealed serious problems of damp for tenants who complained vigorously to the Council. On the Slatyford Lane case see e.g. MD/NC/115/1 18.02.1954; MD/NC/106/12 25.03.1954; MD/NC/115/3 11.04.1957

¹³⁸ Letters arrived at the Housing and Housing Management Committees from tenant's associations asking for meeting rooms, e.g. MD/NC/106/12 25.03.1954; MD/NC/106/13 05.02.1959 Slatyford Lane Tenant's Association leasing a community hall; MD/NC/115/1 26.07.1951 North Fenham and District Residents' Association applying to build a meeting hall

¹³⁹ The garden had been a site of social control since the model villages of the nineteenth century. The garden for the Ministry of Health in the immediate post-war period seemed to continue a notion of the tenant's freedom with responsibility, an encapsulation of a sense of citizenship:

To develop a sense of shared responsibility is admittedly a difficult task and one which probably becomes the harder as the estates grow larger. Where so much lies outside the control of the individual tenant, it becomes more important to emphasise his [sic.] freedom within the limited space of his own garden, and the effect of the competition he can make there to the appearance of the whole neighbourhood.

Ministry of Health, *The Appearance of Housing Estates*, London: HMSO, 1948, p. 13

Thus gardening competitions would be a way of bringing back a sense of the collective in a responsible-minded tenant. And thus Newcastle Council encouraged such competitions for its tenants. Neglected gardens were interpreted as a sign of poor tenant compliance after a measure of warnings and checks and notices to leave their housing could be sent to tenants: see e.g. MD/NC/115/1 28.03.1957 – by 1961 Graham King, the Director of Housing, mentioned the garden as a site for monitoring tenant behaviour, Graham King, Newcastle Housing Management Committee, *General Report on Housing Management*, Newcastle-u-Tyne: Housing Committee, 1960, p.20

¹⁴⁰ NCCM 04.03.53

¹⁴¹ Peter Kemp and Peter Williams, Housing management: an historical perspective in Stuart Lowe and David Hughes, *A New Century of Social Housing*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991, p.122-123

¹⁴² A. Ravetz (2001), op. cit., p.130

¹⁴³ NCCM 05.12.45. This was implied in the call for housing for homecoming soldiers, the fact that housing was a 'national emergency' and the call for housing to be a non-class issue during a Council debate shortly after the War.

¹⁴⁴ NCCM 21.04.54

¹⁴⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, ch. Strategies and Tactics.

¹⁴⁶ MD/NC/115/3 24.10.57 Housing Manager Report on the Exchange Bureau

¹⁴⁷ A. Ravetz (2001), op. cit., p. 118

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Mrs. MS, January, 2001.

¹⁴⁹ Graham King, *A General report on Housing Management*, Newcastle: Housing Management Committee, Dec. 1961, p. 6-11

¹⁵⁰ For a history of the concept of the 'problem family see' Jose Harris, 'Between civic virtue and Social Darwinism: the concept of the residuum' in D. Englander and Rosemary O'Day, *Retrieved Riches: social investigations in Britain 1870-1914*, Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995. John Macnicol, In Pursuit of the Underclass, *Journal of Social Policy*, 16, (3), p.293-318.

John Welshman, In Search of the 'Problem Family': Public Health and Social Work in England and Wales 1940-70, *Social History of Medicine*, 9,(3), p.447-465; Newcastle Council set up a Joint Sub-Committee as to Rehabilitation which heard from both the Medical Officer and the Director of Housing on the definition and scale of the 'problem family' issue see MD/NC/113 – the Committee finally accepted the need for a case work based Family Advice Unit. Working Party on Problem families, *Report Newcastle*, 1966

¹⁵¹ Lorna C. Goldsmith, The Problem of 'Problem Families': Managing housing and tenants in Newcastle in the 1960s, paper presented at Charles University, Prague, *Conference: Meeting the 'Other'*, August 2002

- ¹⁵² A. Ravetz (1980) op. cit., p.36-37; L. Esher, *A Broken Wave: the rebuilding of England, 1940-1980*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981, p.176
- ¹⁵³ Town Planning Committee, *Plan of Newcastle upon Tyne*, Newcastle: Town Planning Committee, 1945, p.71
- ¹⁵⁴ Patrick, Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan 1944*, London: HMSO, 1945; Town Planning Committee, op. cit., p.68; Phil Jones, Historical continuity and post-1945 urban redevelopment: the case of Lee Bank, Birmingham, UK, *Planning Perspectives*, 2004, 19, (4), p.376
- ¹⁵⁵ David Byrne, The Reconstruction of Newcastle: Planning since 1945, in W. Lancaster and R. Colls, *Newcastle upon Tyne. A Modern History*, Chichester, Phillimore & Co Ltd., 2001, p.343
- ¹⁵⁶ EC 18.1045
- ¹⁵⁷ EC 18.10.45
- ¹⁵⁸ W. Lowes, *Evening Chronicle*, 21.12.45
- ¹⁵⁹ A. Ravetz and R. Turkington, *The Place of Home. English Domestic Environments, 1914-2000*, London: E & FN Spon, 1995, p.49-50
- ¹⁶⁰ Town Planning Committee, op. cit., p.89 – this quote lies very close to a similar notion held by the Minister of health, Aneurin Bevan – social mix and a sound planning system was projected to lead to a sense of democratic accountability in citizens and build links to planning authorities. Abigail Beach and Nick Tiratsoo, The planners and the public, in Martin Daunt, *Cambridge Urban History*, Vol. 3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000
- ¹⁶¹ W. Burns, *Development Plan Review: Towards a New Housing Policy – the Planning Base*, Newcastle: Newcastle City Council, 1962, p.1
- ¹⁶² Town Planning Committee, op. cit., p.61
- ¹⁶³ Town Planning Committee, op. cit., p.89
- ¹⁶⁴ N. Tiratsoo, “New Vistas”, the Labour Party, citizenship and the built environment in the 1940s, in A Beach and R. Weight (eds.), *The Right to Belong. Citizenship and national identity in Britain 1930-1960*, London: J.B. Tarvis, 1998, p.140-142; N. Tiratsoo, The Construction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-55: Myths and Reality, *Contemporary British History*, 2000, 14, (1), p.39-41
- ¹⁶⁵ NCCM 19.12.45
- ¹⁶⁶ A. Ravetz, (1980), op. cit., p.33-37
- ¹⁶⁷ W. Burns, *Town Plan Review*, Newcastle Town Planning Committee, 1963
- ¹⁶⁸ Ian Nairn, Outrage, Special edition, *Architectural Review*, 1955
- ¹⁶⁹ W. Burns, (1963), op. cit., p.59
- ¹⁷⁰ W. Burns, Report of the City Planning Officer, *Shieldfield Neighbourhood Centre*, Newcastle Town Planning Committee, 1965, p. 10
- ¹⁷¹ W. Burns, *Towards a New Housing Policy*, Newcastle: Newcastle Planning Committee, 1962
- ¹⁷² W. Burns, (1962), op. cit., p.20
- ¹⁷³ W. Burns, (1962) op. cit. p.18
- ¹⁷⁴ David Byrne, (2001), op. cit., p.348
- ¹⁷⁵ Helen Meller, Urban renewal and citizenship: the quality of life in British cities, 1890-1990, *Urban History*, 1995, 22, (1), p.63-84
- ¹⁷⁶ W. Burns, *Newcastle. A Study in Redevelopment*, London: Architectural Press, 1967, p.11-12
- ¹⁷⁷ Mass Observation, *An Enquiry in to People's Houses*, London: John Murray, 1943; Ruth Glass, *The Social Background of a Plan. A study of Middlebrough*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1948; Dennis Chapman, *The Home and Social Class*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955
- ¹⁷⁸ Leo Kuper, Social science research and the planning of urban communities, *Social Forces*, 1950-51, (29), p.238. For a contemporary sociological field-work based study see, Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1970 (1957)
- ¹⁷⁹ D. Chapman, op. cit., p.3
- ¹⁸⁰ Norman Dennis, The popularity of the neighbourhood community idea, *Sociological Review*, 1958, 6 (new series), p.193-195
- ¹⁸¹ N. Dennis, (1958), op. cit., p.203
- ¹⁸² N. Dennis, (1958), op. cit., p.199

¹⁸³ PRO HLG 90/58 Professor Ian Bowen, Housing Policy in Denmark, Appendix to Sheppard Fidler, Chief Architect, Crawley DC), *Report on his visit to Scandinavia*, 08-25.05.49; Ian Bowen, Housing Policy in Denmark, *The Architects' Journal*, August 4, 1949, p.133

¹⁸⁴ Peter Malpass, *Housing Associations and Housing Policy. A Historical Perspective*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000, p.111

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ He was after all writing in an architectural journal, to an audience hungry for technical solutions, rather than new governmental procedures.

¹⁸⁷ Ian Bowen, (1949), *op. cit.*, p.133

Elizabeth Denby had observed this connection on her tours of European urban housing in 1938. Elizabeth Denby, *Europe Rehoused*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1938, 264-265. More recently, public administrators have sought an exemplar in the participatory democracy in Danish social housing associations. Some of the threads of such an argument will be examined in the present chapter. Anne Power, *Hovels to High Rise, State housing in Europe since 1870*, London: Routledge, 1993

¹⁸⁸ Lotte Jensen, *Demokratiforestillinger i den almennyttige boligsektor*, Cph.: Institut for Statskundskab, 1997; Lotte Jensen, Images of Democracy in Danish Social Housing, in M. Thompson, G. Grendstad, and P. Selle, *Cultural Theory as Political Science*, London: Routledge, 1999; Rod Rhodes, *Understanding Governance: Comparing public sector reform in Britain and Denmark*, Working Paper, Demokratiprojektet, Cph.: Institut for Statsvidenskab, 1999

¹⁸⁹ This is implied by Harloe's arguments in *The People's Home?* Where he makes the general concluding point that the role of the 'co-operative model' of housing was subsumed under conventional party political decision making. p. 523

¹⁹⁰ Maureen Calcott, The Governance of the Victorian City, in Bill Lancaster and Rob Colls (eds.), *Newcastle upon Tyne. A Modern History*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co, Ltd., 2001, p.73

¹⁹¹ S. Kolstrup, *Fra kommunesocialisme til folkepension. Velfærdsstatens rødder*, Cph.: Selskabet til Forskning i Arbejderbevægelsens Historie, 1996; Klaus Petersen, *op. cit.*

¹⁹² N. F. Christiansen, Reformism within Danish Social Democracy until the Nineteen Thirties, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 1978, (3), p.304

¹⁹³ Sten Arnum, *Boligforeningen Vesterbo 1946-1996*, Århus: Boligforeningen Vesterbo, 1996, p.4. Boligforeningen Vesterbo, Committee Meeting Minutes, 08.11.46. It was decided not to respond to press accusations that the housing association was Communists led. It instead passed critical commentary on any sitting government when policies acted against the interests of residents in social housing. Maybe it saw its role as advocate first and foremost. Critical leaders from Vesterbo's magazine appeared regularly in *Boligen* in the 1960s.

¹⁹⁴ A. Sutcliffe discussed the different urban landscapes of British and European cities in terms of the more widespread appearance of fortified towns on the Continent in his introduction to A. Sutcliffe (ed.), *Multi-Storey Living. The British Working-Class Experience*, London: Croom helm, 1974, p.7-8.

¹⁹⁵ MD/NC/106/4 20.09.23, 05.02.25, Pendower Tenants' association, letter of complaint to Housing Committee

Chapter 4

The spectacle of social housing in Århus and Newcastle

Introduction

The previous chapter showed that communication between housing providers, planners and residents was given different levels of priority in Århus and Newcastle. As planning and physical construction were implemented, municipalities and the technical professions who worked on their behalf perceived a pressing need to communicate with citizens as reconstruction became an instrumental part of everyday life. During the latter half of the twentieth century a visual culture and language of urban promotion arose that shaped the messages of change and improvement. Images of cities could be employed as devices for 'selling' and reinforcing the idea of place to a variety of audiences. This chapter will look at some of the vehicles for disseminating ideas about social housing to local audiences in Århus and Newcastle.

Recent literature on place promotion considers the history its various strategies in order to reflect on the ideological practices that support a city's urbanisation processes.¹ Its comparative orientation has been mainly trans-Atlantic. There is clearly scope for a wider study of urban promotional strategies in Europe. This chapter can only make suggestions for such work, since it examines these strategies in the light of the history of social housing, only glimpsing at the discourse of urban promotion. The promotion of social housing is intimately linked with urban promotion however. Whereas much urban marketing, branding and sloganising was aimed at the external audiences of national and international financial and industrial interests, housing promotion became a means of communicating at the local level, to urban audiences. Moreover, it became integrally linked to local housing policy as the century wore on. There is therefore a need to explore the strategies and meanings that formed around the promotion of social housing.

This chapter examines the official discourse embedded in exhibitionary practices. It considers the directions that Århus and Newcastle adopted in their promotional strategies. As the previous chapter showed, the management of social housing in Århus and Newcastle was re-organised in the post-war period. In the case of Newcastle it became increasingly professionalised during the 1950s, while housing association membership in Århus

continued to include an element of participatory principles, albeit with growing distances between membership and Committee structures. Such distance did not preclude efforts to form responses to, the housing strategies and urban developments that were implemented in the cities.² Hitherto little attention has been given to this aspect of housing management: how was the promotional discourse of social housing employed by the housing authorities and planners, municipal and voluntary, as a device for mediating their policies? In both cities, it will be suggested, promotional strategies and messages were projected, that became embedded in the housing policies and urban regeneration strategies within the two cities.

The citizen might be encouraged to feel comfortably at home in the modern city that Århus and Newcastle aspired to become. Apart from the core concerns of providing socially amenable urban architectural design, the improvement of domestic principles of taste was implicated in the visions of the cities and was embedded in issues of housing policy. During the 1950s and 1960s, in the view of politicians, designers and architects, the success of such 'encouragement' might manifest itself in consent to their ideas. Although this chapter cannot measure the results of such hegemonic objectives, it can study the means deployed to achieve it, as well as point to later chapters that discuss the contested terrain of city spaces during urban regeneration schemes (chapters 5 and 6). The chapter will therefore study the way issues of housing citizenship were perceived from above, how tenants and residents were shaped as ideal tenants and citizens within promotional messages. The chapter assumes that not only did the local housing authorities in the two cities approach their housing provision from the point of view of landlords and construction managers, but that their politics of social housing extended to a visual language of social housing. Houses were material artefacts, but also functioned as conduits of ideas of family life, citizenship and civic pride.

Professional learning and public education in social housing and domestic living in Århus

Århus was the second largest city in Denmark and became the key nodal point for cultural and commercial life in Jutland. It became a central location for exhibitions and displays that related to the architecture and housing of modern urban life in the provinces. As the twentieth century progressed and city living became increasingly normalised, town planners and architects played a role in creating a language of Danish domestic life and home-

centred culture that was disseminated widely and became incorporated into the discourse of social housing associations in their work to build a modern housing system. The informed citizen was a high priority for both social housing associations and the architectural profession. The modern home in a modern housing area could be projected as a truly democratic space. The concern of the housing providers was to present democratic messages about town planning and social housing systems, which became implicitly integrated with ideas about modern domestic living. The quality of the educational message was an issue that required exploration and work. Constructive learning opportunities for the popular lay-audience were central to encourage awareness and engagement in Danish citizens.

As modernists with a strong Enlightenment inheritance of progress and renewal, Danish architects sought always to improve upon the housing culture of the country.³ Even if it became noticeable that the public did not always appreciate the intervention by architects in their everyday lives, Danish architects persisted in defining their role as professional educators. Indeed the Danish concept of 'housing culture' (*boligkultur*) was a means to conceive a way of life experienced within the home, where architecture and design played a determining role in raising the quality of life of residents.⁴ Housing associations similarly absorbed and projected notions of housing and home as life enhancing, as well as nurturing democratic culture. For socialist architects this included a critical observation of housing policy: A topic that was repeatedly debated in the architectural press, as it affected their professional relationship with housing associations.⁵ It is therefore worth examining how Danish architects 'sold' themselves as an indispensable discipline to the general public; how they mediated their practice in the light of contemporary housing policy. Later sections will show how this was reflected in social housing displays in Århus.

The Danish architectural design profession: Århusian exhibitions

Danish architects had been thinking about the pedagogic aspects of displays since before the war.⁶ Exhibitions were prime sites for legitimising to citizens the professional role of architects in society. In 1939 Århus hosted the 60th anniversary exhibition by the Danish architectural association, *Akademisk Arkitektforening*. As Århus was the 'capital of Jutland' hosting a major exhibition here provided an opportunity for reaching a large general audience.⁷ The display centred on national construction concerns, and the role of design in modern ways of living. The original hope had been that 50,000 people might visit the show

from across Denmark. Unfortunately the display coincided with the German invasion of Poland, and so audience figures fell vastly below the planned target - in the end the exhibition only approx. 15,000 visitors came.⁸ However the display strategies were significant for their quality and the attention drawn to them by reviewers reveals the reasons for their success, leading to the use of similar exhibition strategies in the post-war period.

The architectural press stressed the importance of public education strategies. A publicity campaign had paved the way for the exhibition, but for some observers publicity was secondary to the pedagogic effects of the exhibition itself.⁹ It was essential to get the pedagogy right in the displays, so that the reception of the message would be taken up successfully. The display had contained advisory sections on interior design, while technical information from the construction industries was displayed by contrasting 'correct' and 'wrong' techniques. One reviewer stressed that exhibitions should be more than a type of shop-window design, they should be enlightening, and nurture a growing popular interest in the exhibition's central architectural idea.

A key message of the exhibition stressed the importance of the architect for private house builders, aided by the favourable state funded loans available at the end of the 1930s. Yet there were equally informative displays on the architects' role as designers of flats, the role of architects in the design work of the Danish co-operative movement's modern furniture schemes, and Danish craftsmanship in functional household objects (Fig. 4.1).¹⁰ Local Århusian banks and lending societies provided information on housing finance, while local construction industries provided displays of materials and construction methods deployed in housing production.



Fig. 4.1 The introductory section of the 1939 architectural exhibition showed the guardian angel of architecture captioned by a text that read 'The role of the architect is not limited to construction but also involves the shaping of any everyday good'. *Arkitektens Maanedshæfte*, 1939, p.121

A popular exhibit with the public had been the model flat, Larsen's flat (*Larsens Lejlighed*), where people had the chance to test contemporary furniture and view the architectural layout of an 'average' three room flat. While the exhibition appeared as a celebration of the architect's role in housing, such consumer information sections advised on the issues to consider prior to renting a flat. The future tenant, it was advised, should consider the modern needs of the household to the last detail: the need for storage space, access to a balcony, access to light and air in the flat, and most importantly, the lay-out of the kitchen. The smallest designed domestic objects shared the same space as local and national structural organisations and implicitly seemed to suggest a conflation of everyday life with national ideological interests. It was the interest in such domestic concerns that may have encouraged the national design and architecture societies to continue to pursue their educational strategies in improving everyday life. Housing associations shared such interests in Århus as across the country in general.

Although major exhibition work had almost ceased during the occupation the post-war period saw an upsurge of displays and educational efforts in the area of housing and town planning. The didactic work undertaken by British town planners was greatly admired by

Danish architects in the wake of British liberation of the country. Dimensions of democracy were uppermost in the intellectual consciousness.¹¹ In their concern to support the democratic process in post-war Denmark, architects looked for innovative models, partly found in interwar Swedish social democratic social planning, but also in Anglo-American urban planning practice.¹² Such international sources became embedded within Danish architectural rhetoric on the best way forward for town planning. British wartime urban planning promotion was especially emphasised as building up a sense of civic responsibility in the country's population, for example experienced through travelling exhibitions. When the British Town planning exhibition, *Rebuilding Britain* was shown in Copenhagen in 1946 one reviewer was almost over-whelmed by the technical quality of the exhibits. They seemed convincing and persuasively realistic:¹³

... the English town planning exhibition [in Copenhagen, 1946] carries a message that is more directed at the professionals. It represents in itself a wish to speak to the man in the street, to raise his interest in the urban society of which he is part, call for his sense of responsibility and understanding. In England they have to a fantastic extent created such a public interest and public opinion in these matters. Through books, brochures, lectures on the radio, travelling exhibitions etc. they have during the war been able to awaken a sense of living responsibility in the population towards the developments of future town plans. It contributes to the production of a political basis for the progressive plans that are put forward.¹⁴

Danish architects and planners saw in the exhibition an exemplar of citizen education. Characteristically the observer employed a Danish cultural metaphor to speak of the engagement of the popularising architectural enterprise. His use of the notion of 'a sense of a living responsibility' echoed the discourse of informed citizenship that pervaded much of the political debate at this time. Democratic values were re-considered for a post-war Danish society. Popularising techniques to promote town planning may already have been employed, but architects continuously sought professional outlets for their socially conscious didactic ambitions. It may have been displays such as these that helped convince Danish architects to build upon the force of visual exhibitions. Certainly the Århusian municipal and housing authorities' promotional aims to enlighten a popular audience absorbed and developed such notions in their creation of a space for information and education. The sphere of design, whether in urban planning, in housing estates or within the home might be enveloped in the democratic message: well-designed domestic living was desirable and achievable through the work of architects and their masters, the local authority and social housing associations.

Examining the city and social housing in the politics of display

Post-war Danish public life was infused with debates about the meaning of Danish democracy in the light of the crisis of confidence that had arisen after the government's acquiescence under German occupation. In Århus the projection of democratic housing was underpinned by the social housing association system, further bolstered by the local authority. Lessons learned from exhibitions in Copenhagen were adopted in Århus to impart the housing message. A series of exhibitions during the immediate post-war period emphasised certain meanings about family life and connections between the rights of the family to decent housing and the organisational forms that this housing would take. The background for the exhibition and display strategies was the pressure on the local authority to be seen to be proactively constructing the infrastructure of the city, while residents were encouraged to show patience in order for the construction and provision to make its impact in their lives in a timely fashion.

One contribution to the debate on democracy was embodied in a display on local government and civic structures in Århus in 1949. The exhibition was intended for a tour of three Scandinavian towns: Göteborg in Sweden, Aabo in Norway and Århus.¹⁵ Although the towns at this stage were not explicitly concerned with city twinning efforts (an idea more prevalent in the 1960s) they still worked at facilitating Nordic friendship relations, and thus presented their urban conditions in a comparative framework.¹⁶ Århus' contribution was initially on show in the new town hall. The power of the physical presence of the town hall cannot be underestimated in its evocation of local and national patriotism during the German occupation and beyond.¹⁷ The town hall officially opened in 1941, when it was celebrated as the solid seat of modern local government during a year when the city celebrated a major civic anniversary.¹⁸ It was a physical structure that bridged the symbolic power of an exhibition with a physical space that bore witness to municipal administration and local pride. Within it then, an exhibition would be bolstered by the reassurance of a perceptive and commanding local authority

The exhibition projected the Council as the corner stone of a budding local welfare state through text and images. The city's historical role as a centre for trade was celebrated, while later panels displayed the provisions that gave equal right to education, housing, health and work for everyone.¹⁹ The display illustrated not only the organisation of urban administration, but also emphasised the significance of Århus in terms of its various

industrial activities. It concluded on the key position the city held as an historical, educational, cultural and administrative centre (Figs. 4.2-4.5).²⁰ Descriptions of the city's demography and individual household expenditures were illustrated schematically, whilst the concerns of the Århusian planning bodies were represented, including the distribution of housing. The distribution of housing was shown on a map of the city to contrast the problem of flats versus low housing density in Århus and its surrounding suburbs. With this exhibition Århus Council acknowledged the benefits of public information to its local democracy in the wake of occupation and oppression. The city's population in the first instance needed information on their social rights in order to gain the most from them.

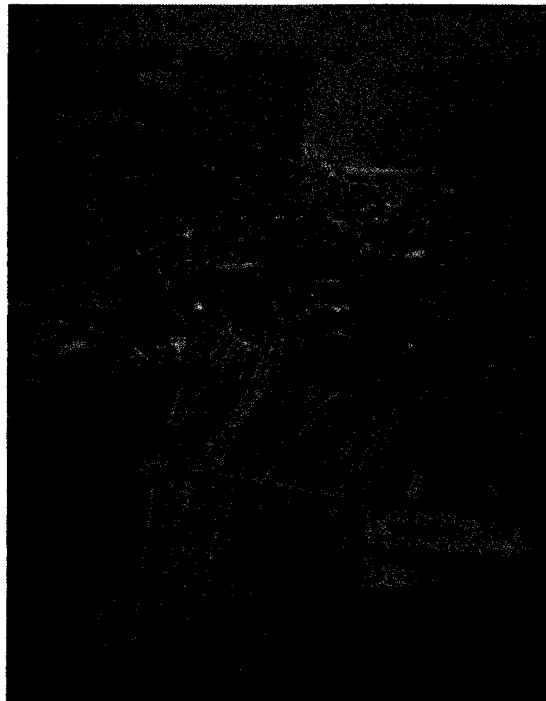


Fig. 4.2 'Welcome to Århus' a poster from the 1948 exhibition showing a panoramic birds eye view of the city looking across the railway lines from the south west towards the city centre and across to the Kattegat sea beyond. The City Architect's Office, Århus Council.



Fig. 4.3 Key industries of Århus and their distribution, poster from the 1948 exhibition. The images include beer barrels from the Ceres brewery, the national railway factories, fishing, the working trade port and retail. The City Architect's Office, Århus Council.

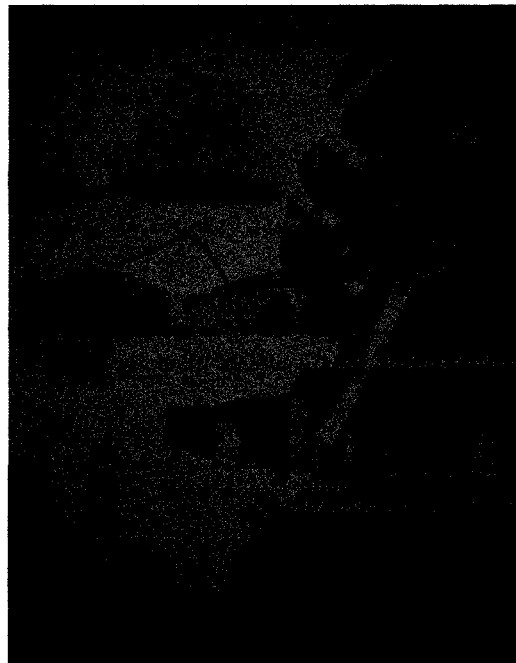


Fig. 4.4 'The Harbour – the Life-Nerve of the City', a poster from the 1948 exhibition illustrating the importance of Århus as capital of Jutland, illustrated with references to shipping, cultural centres, Denmark's second university and the new town hall.²¹ The City Architect's Office, Århus Council.

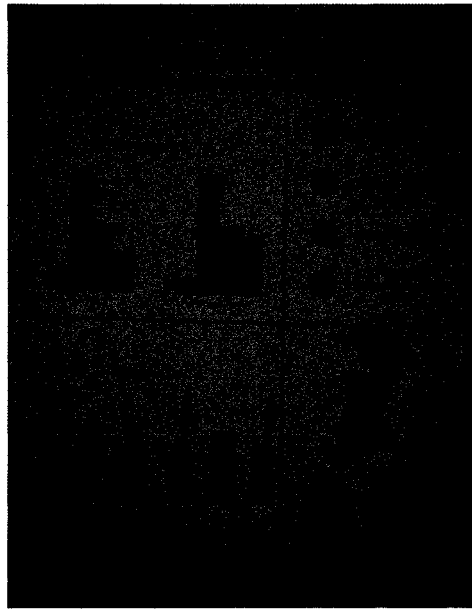


Fig. 4.5 Statistical rendition of the housing situation in Århus, delineated in graphical form by the distribution of various dwelling sizes across the city. A poster from the 1948 exhibition. The City Architect's Office, Århus Council.

However information alone was insufficient to alleviate the stresses on a population. It continued to feel the pressure of the housing shortage and a deficient urban infrastructure. The previous chapter revealed the slow start in post-war housing construction. It is not surprising that citizens were feeling impatient as their housing needs remained unfulfilled. By the early 1950s the Århusian Mayor therefore addressed the city's citizens in didactic tones. In a New Year's letter to the Århusian population published in the social democratic newspaper, *Demokraten*, Unmack Larsen addressed the citizen-reader in order to justify the actions taken by the municipality to resolve the housing crisis.²² During a time when the public was concerned about the housing situation, Larsen declared that he was unable to personally be involved in the housing allocation process.²³ Citizens must rely on the bureaucratic, yet democratic processes tackling future housing questions. He defended the Council's work to build up levels of housing construction and the provision of new welfare measures. The Council, he suggested, was doing its utmost within the limits of national housing policy. Larsen emphasised that new social-philanthropic housing built in collaboration with a social housing association would greatly improve housing conditions for large families and those in most need.

At this stage Larsen stressed that citizenship at the very least required tax contributions. Implicitly he called for positive support and recognition of the municipality's service, or supportive clientilism, on behalf of the city. Even private commercial interests had been making almost altruistic sacrifices:

Well, we always begin and end with the question of housing, because of the terrible mess we are still buried in....., even in our town, which has looked so pretty and nice at Christmas time.... and which also contains so much deprivation we would all of us rather be without. But in this case no-one can push away their responsibilities, not even you [the citizen reader], even if you still say you have paid your taxes. - This is something the commercial body of our city has also become aware of, as it has until now paid thousands of *Kroner* towards social-philanthropic housing - in addition to taxes!²⁴

Social housing was high on the agenda. Rather than drawing attention to housing associations as publicly funded bodies, his emphasis on private contribution here reveals the private responsibilities of private citizens. Perhaps the ambiguous nature of housing associations between the state and market interests would have blurred the message of duty within local citizenship. The Mayor could proudly present a series of activities that - apart from solving the housing problem - were creating a modern city, such as inner city road improvements and parking schemes. Persuasion was used to encourage patience and support for a welfare city in growth.

How could engagement by the public in housing concerns be sparked, when frustration and possibly apathy seemed so overwhelming? Certainly the press was a key forum. But the exhibition as a medium might have an impact upon popular ideas. Thus Århus' leaders employed the press and the exhibition as devices to legitimise its activities. If earlier architectural exhibitions had promoted housing as part of a wider professional concern for popular awareness of Modernism in design, later activities turned to the politicisation of the public on housing matters more widely. By welcoming a controversial housing exhibition to Århus in 1953 the Mayor enabled housing association philosophy to take centre stage and to potentially fill a gap where the public was impatient for progress.²⁵ This joint venture between the city's social democratic leadership and the Labour Movement might, with the population's help, substantiate quality housing for the future. The display 'Housing Now' (*Boliger Nu*) addressed architectural and planning concerns with inner city slums and suggested solutions for a balanced community and domestic environments (Figs. 4.6-4.7).²⁶



Fig. 4.6 A bird's eye view of the 'Housing now' exhibition, Århus Town Hall, 1953: in the foreground a partitioned area for the display of contemporary room settings, in the background a continuous wall of illustrated text panels created by the National Federation of Danish Housing Associations describing the evolution of housing from the primitive hut of the past and other cultures to the future hopes of Danish social housing for tomorrow. The City Architect's Office, Århus Council.

The exhibition had originally arisen from architectural and planning concerns with slums in Copenhagen, and was accompanied by a conference and publication of proceedings. Yet the media's attention to the event was limited as the project was by some considered to be led by communist activists. During a period when the Danish government was projecting itself as embedded in a western democratic tradition in opposition to Soviet Communism, the accusation was fierce indeed. But this did not seem to worry the Mayor of Århus, who considered the exhibition an important part of educating the population of social housing issues.

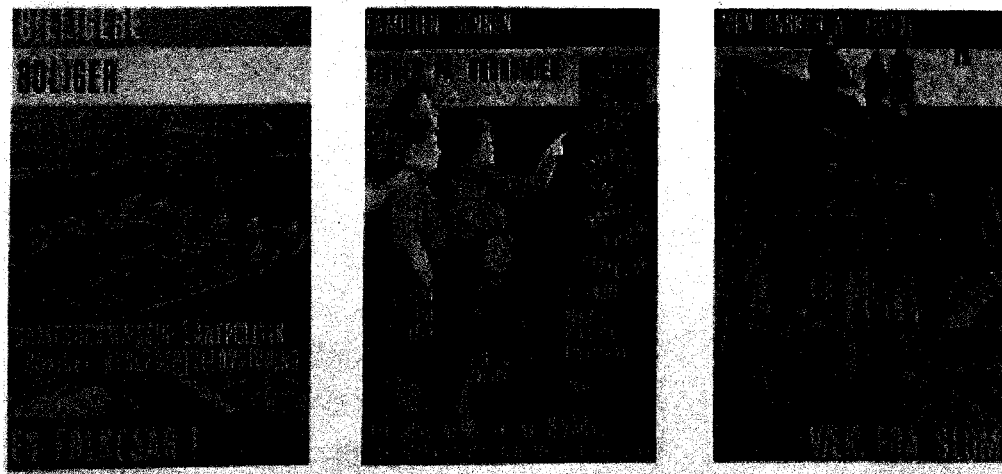


Fig. 4.7 Part of a poster series from the 1953 'Housing Now' exhibition demanding socially amenable family housing. Other posters included attacks on speculative housing and profiteering on tenants. The three images show (from the left): a) Poster demanding cheaper housing and a socially amenable state loan policy for housing: 'A People's Issue!'; b) A summary illustration of a (Copenhagen) working class family's expenses implying c) The financial needs required for the family to move away from slum. Image from Ole Thomassen, (ed.), *Krise i boligspørgsmålet [The Crisis of the Housing Question]*, Conference proceedings, Cph.: Det Danske Forlag, 1954

The message of the display were threefold: A sociologically inspired section concentrated on the problems facing an average Danish family (the Jensen family) and the socially unjust nature of private speculation: the lack of new and larger housing types, overcrowding, the high cost of private rents, private landlord exploitation, the dangers of building austerity housing rather than building for quality, and the social consequences arising from housing problems - the break-up of families, lonely children, fatigue and neurosis.²⁷ The detrimental social and health implications of slum housing pointed to the compelling improvements needed for family housing (Fig. 4.8). Another part of the display was devoted to a progressive history of Danish housing, with a strong emphasis on the role of the public sector and social housing associations. History was the thread that led the narrative of housing conditions to its conclusion in the present and hope for the future (Fig. 4.9). A third area consisted of room settings informing visitors of the appropriate aesthetics for modern living.



Fig. 4.8 A panel by the NFDHA showing the value of social housing for society at the 1953 'Housing Now' exhibition. Children dancing in green parkland surrounding social housing in Copenhagen symbolised the hope for a future of a nurturing family living space. The City Architect's Office, Århus Council.

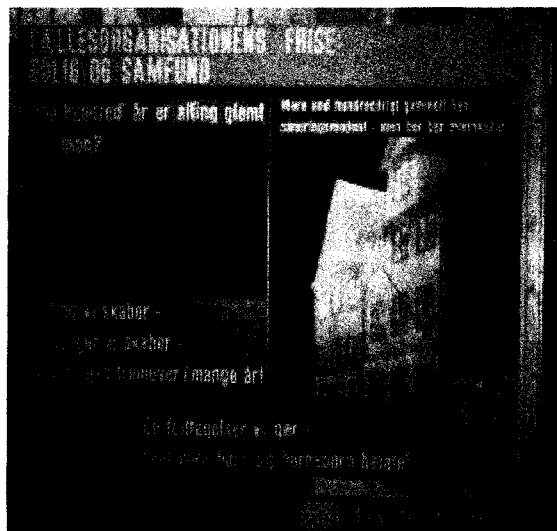


Fig. 4.9 The start of the panel series by the NFDHA: 'Housing and Society': the text on the first panel stated: 'In a hundred years' time everything will be forgotten – or will it? – the things we create, the housing we create – will be used in the future. The mistakes we make – our children and grandchildren will pay for!' An image of a 'More than one hundred year old house – due for demolition – but people live here.' The City Architect's Office, Århus Council.

While the exhibition may have been dominated by political messages relating to housing policy, it also included room settings displaying fashionable consumer-oriented furniture, which contrasted with the emphasis on the potential financial and social problems of individual households represented in the section on slums and housing policy. This part of the exhibition reflected the contradictions and ambiguities of providing types of decommodified social housing in a society that also for a large part desired private housing and homes. Room settings in the latest furnishing fashions were on display, speaking to a level of consumption which poorer families would have been unable to afford (Fig. 4.10). Yet here the Modernist argument that Danish architects had been promoting for two decades continued: these room fittings were integral to the discourse on moral advance through improved domestic design, a discourse similar to the one espoused during the 1930s.

The civilising movement towards a decommodified housing environment was fused with notions of good taste and modernity in the home, albeit suffused with the implicit ambiguity of consumer lifestyles. Despite the critical tone of the poster display social housing associations and amenable local authorities such as Århus was represented as providing hope for the future.

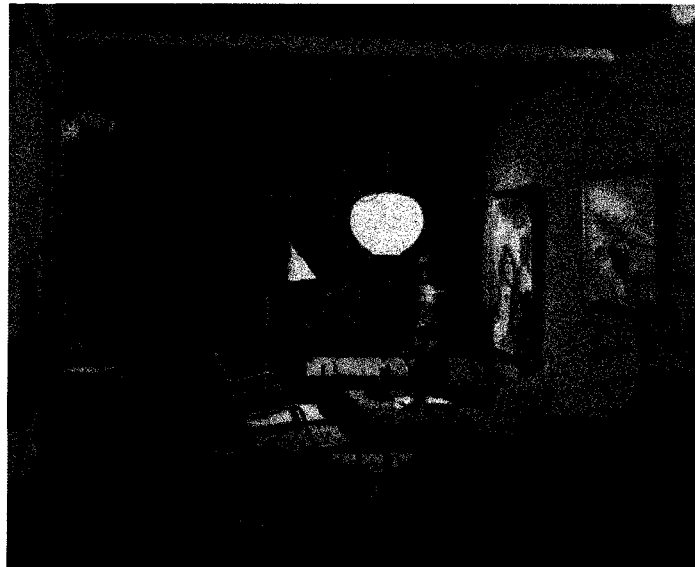


Fig. 4.10 Room setting showing a fashionable home at the 'Housing Now' exhibition, 1953 - a style that was to become fashionable in the United Kingdom as Scandinavian modern. The City Architect's Office, Århus Council.

The city tour of Århus – industry and housing developments

Continuities between the Århusian housing and urban government exhibitions had shown the importance of housing associations as key players in the housing policies of the city. Although the main audience for exhibitions was the population of Århus, the city's visitors would also benefit from projections of Århus Council as the builder of welfare provisions, including healthy modern social housing. Displaying the urban environment during the city tour, which civic leaders employed to show off their city to significant visitors, was a means to anchor the meanings of the Danish welfare state in the local arena. Århusian urban promotion through the city tour does not appear to have been a means to boost the city's position industrially as a result of urban decline.²⁸ On the contrary, as a city in growth it had little need to entice commerce to settle. Rather, the city was emboldened by the general industrial progress nationally. Nevertheless the city tour was a way to expand the perception of Århus as a key local centre, in implicit competition with the capital, as a hub of modern development. Furthermore material manifestations of successful planning and housing developments could bring an element of legitimacy to municipal expansion. Thus new social housing and neighbourhood units featured heavily in the itinerary of such tours.

Certainly new building projects reinforced civic pride. When Århus Council hosted the 1948 annual conference held by the Danish Town Planning Institute (*Dansk Byplanlaboratorium*) (which inspired the subsequent architectural controversy (discussed in chapter 3)), the optional study visits took delegates around the newest construction projects in Århus.²⁹ This included a view of the harbour and its seaward planning, a tour of the municipal gas and water works, a visit to road works and finally a tour of the most recently built housing projects. Here was an opportunity for the Council to show off its latest achievements in constructing the bricks and mortar of its municipal welfare achievements. The housing it presented had already featured in the architectural press.³⁰ It probably included the *Mølleparken* and *Rytterparken* areas, which were designed as contained neighbourhood units.³¹ It is also likely that similar housing was shown to Hans-Erik Langkilde, the Chair of The Federation of Danish Architects (*Danske Arkitekters Landsforbund*), when he visited Århus in 1952 following an invitation by the local Federation of Academic Architects (*Akademisk Arkitekt Forbund*).³² Langkilde was an author of popularising textbooks and promoter of social housing, mediating problems in

housing from the perspective of the architect, but with a democratic ambition to politicise the issue on behalf of the layman.³³ The Federation took him to see co-operative and the latest social-philanthropic housing in Århus.³⁴ Clearly the publicly funded projects that revealed progressive solutions to local housing problems played a significant role in the consciousness of civic leaders as they contemplated the best way of bolstering their city's image as a dynamic and democratic city to visitors.

It is therefore odd, that when a Newcastle civic delegation at the Mayor's invitation visited Århus during British Week in 1959, it would *not* have been introduced to the Council's partners of the city's housing provisions - housing associations certainly did not feature in the delegation's report to Newcastle Council.³⁵ The delegation had experienced the material environment of Århus as a distinct city in the Danish welfare state: they met at first hand the realities of a welfare 'Utopia' including modern social housing, homes for the elderly, and schools.³⁶ It is more likely that the delegation was unable to reckon with an additional player in a key area of local authority responsibility. Newcastle Council's resistance towards housing associations and its perception of social housing as a local authority concern might therefore have rendered it blind to this additional collaborator in the Danish setting.

Thus the city tour illustrated and reiterated the importance of the municipal contribution to urban development and its support of and collaboration with social housing associations in constructing up to date and relevant (*tidssvarende*) family housing. The development of material housing forms shaped the reality around which citizens lived, to which they returned every day from work, and within which children played and grew up. The framework of housing and urban planning could be selectively presented to anchor and legitimise the view that Århusian municipal care for its community was progressive and nurturing. This was in part absorbed by visitors, who on their return could evoke their memories of the local Danish welfare state as providing a pragmatic supportive environment for its citizens, as Newcastle's Councillors had the opportunity to do in the 1960s.³⁷

Housing association membership magazines

For their part individual Århusian housing associations sought legitimacy through the repeated reiteration of their history, tradition and contemporary achievements. One way of underpinning their daily activities in the local housing area, to build on the engagement of members and encourage a constructive dialogue with city leaders was to emphasise the importance of the housing association system to members and the part they played in a history of social housing work.

One forum that enabled the most vocal presentation of this force was the membership magazine and the anniversary publication. The National Federation of Danish Housing Associations published the national membership magazine, *The Dwelling (Boligen)* from 1933, which had a wide readership of housing association members.³⁸ It came out in fairly small issues, 8 or 10 times a year - by 1968-69 reaching issues of around 4-5,000 copies.³⁹ This publication bolstered the national self-assurance held by the association management. It was a key source of housing policy and housing management themes, and was an important source of information for the active sections of the housing association membership. With the further publication of a residents' magazine (*Beboerbladet Boligen*) the 'housing cause' was considered through a more personal style to a wide readership.⁴⁰ The magazine may have been started as an alternative to the increasing numbers of commercial home decorating magazines appearing on the market, such as *Bo Bedre (Live Better)* (Fig. 4.11).⁴¹ *Beboerbladet boligen* came out from 1963 in editions of 130,000 growing to 200,000 by 1969 (it was claimed that double this figure actually read it).⁴²

Now the view of residents included their status as housing consumers partaking in a greater housing project – housing consumption with a social heart. Residents could find information on general issues such as housing policy, leisure activities and social relations: from childcare concerns and fashion to gender relations in the home. It was also the vehicle for more focused information on the NFDHA's political involvement, and local flagship developments by social housing associations, such as the Gellerup Plan in Århus or the large halls of residents for students being built at the end of the 1960s.⁴³ On its introduction *Beboerbladet boligen* was attacked for being a vehicle for social democratic politics.⁴⁴ It did contain articles that sometimes featured political themes, and one article in particular showed photographs of the Social Democratic Prime Minister at

home with his popular, actor wife and their children.⁴⁵ However the editor defended the publication on non-ideological terms, considering that the housing problem went beyond purely party political lines.⁴⁶



Fig. 4.11 A 1965 copy of *Bo Bedre* a consumer magazine about the home, aimed dominantly at a home owning readership. Author's collection.

Moreover, locally housing associations underpinned their local activities through residents' magazines. An early example is the magazine by Vesterbo, which provided an advisory function for residents in newly built dwellings from the early 1950s, as well as commenting increasingly fiercely on national housing policy, and occasionally cited in *Boligen* for a national readership. In the 1960s and 1970s such magazines became vehicles for residents' voices, published by the housing association through rent funds, but written and edited by residents (examples of these will be considered in chapters 5 and 6). Thus the regular stream of publications to housing association members reinforced the general message of social equity in housing, whilst embracing housing democracy within modern housing culture. Whether a national membership magazine or a local newsletter, the reiteration of the housing message for being culturally and politically influential.

Traditions and Ritual

Another forceful means of promoting the work of social housing associations as a significant force in Århusian history were the anniversary publications published by each association independently and distributed to residents. These publications varied greatly in quality and comprehensiveness.⁴⁷ Sometimes written by residents' representatives these booklets recalled the original cause of the co-operative housing movement, while placing the general housing history in the Århusian setting. A common format for the anniversary publication was an initial congratulatory statement by a local politician or the Chair of the housing association. Then a short history of the housing association followed, with a subsequent description of individual housing areas in chronological order. The social housing association typically represented itself as autonomous, with little analytic description of its relationship to the municipality. Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening (AAB) for example published anniversary publications in 1924, 1944, 1969, and again in 1989, in which its travails, its victories and its most prominent housing projects were celebrated. In its 25th anniversary publication from 1944 the depression of war and occupation was countered by showing the association as a site of shared values, where Danishness could thrive in its particular democratic and co-operative way (Figs. 4.12-4.13).⁴⁸ It showed the association's most recent housing projects and delighted in its contribution to the modern city of Århus. Being one of the largest social housing associations in the city, AAB was involved in major system built projects by the 1960s. In its 1969 anniversary publication, published in an edition of 10,000, AAB could show an impressive achievement encompassing a range of types of Danish domestic architecture (Figs. 4.14-4.15). It now regretted that times had changed and the co-operative idea had suffered, but could on the other hand outline the democratic structure of the organisation, which in principle aimed to include resident participation.⁴⁹ Indeed anniversary publications commonly described the committee structure of a housing association. As residents' democracy became a prominent feature of housing association self-understanding, it was emphasised as an advanced quality of living in association homes. Århus was in this way continuously fore-fronted topographically as well as historically in the consciousness of prospective residents, nurtured by and nurturing in turn Århusian local patriotism and democratic culture.

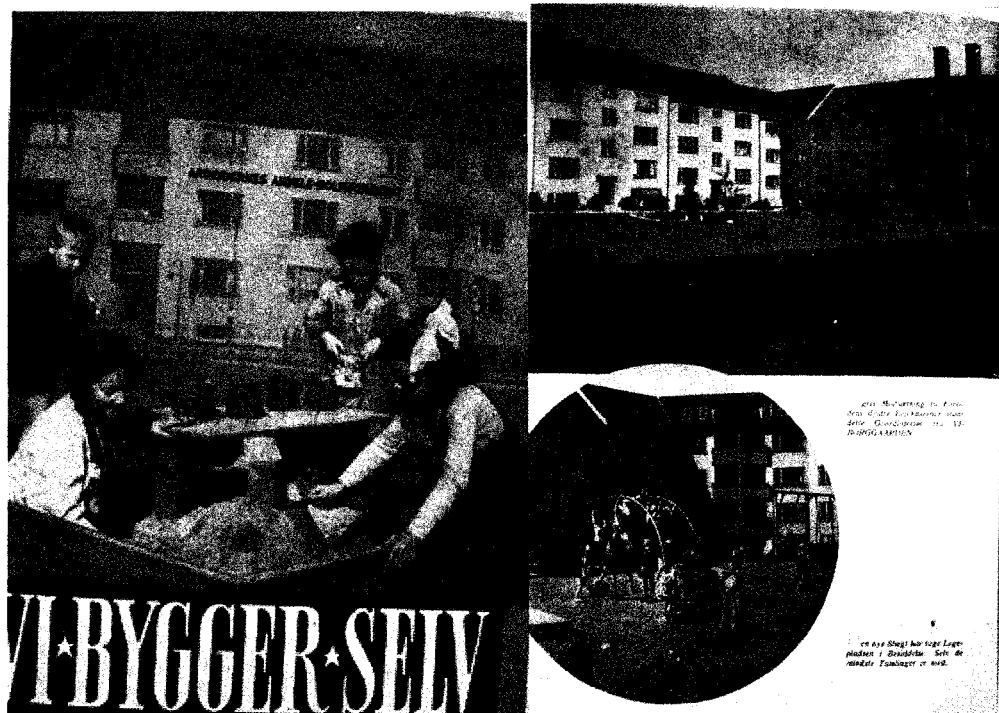


Fig. 4.12, 4.13 Anniversary publication of the Workers Co-Operative Housing Association, 1944, Århus. Frontispiece (left); an illustrated page of a lawned shared area for recently erected flats and the 'new generation' playing in a communal playground (right). AAB, *Vi Bygger selv*, Århus: AAB, 1944.



Fig. 4.14 'Glimpses of Århus'



Figs. 4.14-4.15 By 1969 the AAB anniversary publication could look back to its central contribution to Århus urban housing through a multitude of housing projects in various styles. The 'glimpses' of Århus life that now seemed to inspire the association continued to build on health and youth and the importance of the association to the Århusian cityscape. AAB, 1919-1969, Århus: AAB, 1969

This pride in local achievement could be anchored further in the built environment through a historical tradition that was particular to Continental Europe: the raising of the roof ceremony (Figs. 4.16-4.18). During the 1950s, as each new set of dwelling units was raised, builders, their employers and the contracting authority, celebrated the completion of yet another edifice. The press reported on these events when they were held by social housing associations and in the process contributed to a reiteration of the importance of housing associations as builders of modern city life. The ceremonies were opportunities for Chairs of associations or a local politician to speak about achievements and the future progress of the association. The presence of builders and beer, tradition and technology provided a glowing symbol of the democratic project of Danish social housing. Furthermore, the press also reported on the annual general meetings of housing associations providing the achievements and future plans for the association an important currency in the local media. Through the process of repetition and reiteration the hegemony of a social democratically inspired housing movement could be anchored in Århusian collective consciousness. Before the 1960s this hegemony was rarely

questioned, but with the growth in homeownership and challenges to national government policy during the early 1960s this was to change, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

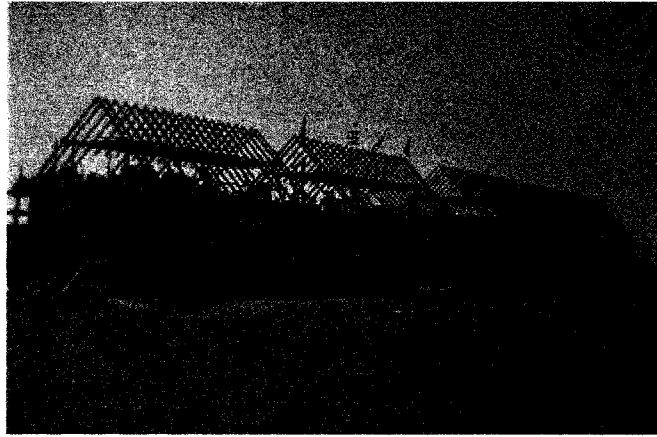


Fig. 4.16



Fig. 4.17



Fig. 4.16-4.18 A raising the roof ceremony at Holme housing association on the outskirts of Århus, early 1950s. The characteristic wreaths and a Danish flag can be seen suspended from the roof rafters (4.16), while construction workers, their employers and officials have a drink after speeches and congratulations have been made (4.17, 4.18). Erhvervsarkivet, Højbjerg Housing Association archive.

Disseminating knowledge of housing and domestic architecture

The foundations for implementing the notions of democracy and collaborative principles in social housing lay with staff within the housing association. From their early origins as voluntary members of the Danish housing movement staff of Danish housing associations had no official body to lean on for professional development. Instead the interest organisation, the National Federation of Danish Housing Associations (NFDHA) provided an annual conference that functioned as an information exchange symposium throughout the 1940s and 1950s. The NFDHA supplemented its information provision through *The Dwelling (Boligen)*: a discussion and information magazine for professional and voluntary staff working in social housing associations. It contained information on the local activities of individual housing associations and disseminated organisational information, up-dating local associations on changes in national housing policy and management practices.

Apart from this national-level vehicle of learning Århusian lay members of the housing movement had access to local training facilities, such as the general adult education forum, Arbejdernes Oplysningsforbund (AOF),⁵⁰ which in the early 1950s provided courses on household economics, local government organization, and housing policy and practice, in addition to the leisure courses generally available for adult learners.⁵¹ AOF

played a small, but key role in the education for Danish citizenship, explaining how housing played a central role in the formation of Danish democratic activities, desired by politicians and 'housing people' (*boligfolk*) alike.⁵² Moreover, committed voluntary members of the associations built up experience in the housing field through the practical management experience of working for a local housing committee or within a local residents' representatives group.⁵³ As training demand grew, the benefits of sharing experience became clear a training centre was provided for members in the 1960s.⁵⁴ Training became a key to the effective dissemination of NFDHA policy to volunteers, while business managers had access to professional development resources.⁵⁵

It would seem that the many-layered, multidimensional nature of housing promotion and education by Århus Council and local housing associations provided important sources of information and persuasion to the city's population. During the post-war decades the messages that were core to the 1953 exhibition on social housing were nevertheless shifting towards a different dimension of social housing with the appearance of a stronger housing consumer in the 1960s.

The promotion of Danish social housing to the housing consumer-citizen.

Each housing association was keen to provide its current and future residents with information about their future housing projects. In addition, the Århusian press, especially the social democratic newspaper, *Demokraten*, was keen to bolster the presence of associations in the city and regularly featured housing association projects, committee annual general meetings, raising the roof ceremonies and analysis of national housing policy. Thus housing issues were kept continuously present in the popular consciousness throughout the mid twentieth century. But as the general housing condition changed from scarcity to a less urgent situation, and the increase in private housing on offer for ownership during the 1960s grew, Danish housing associations renewed their efforts to attract residents for their now growing number of industrially constructed flats. The growth in private housing construction in Århus was significant: in 1965 the private sector constructed 1,128 dwellings (of which 332 were backed by public subsidies) while housing associations built 633. By 1970, with the growth of system building and the expansion of the 'parcelhus' (the detached one-family suburban house) the private sector was building around three times as many dwellings as the Århusian housing associations (3,267 private dwellings (around half now received subsidies) as against 1,309 built by housing

associations).⁵⁶ A shift took place that pushed a budding marketing strategy to the fore, promoting social housing to a consumer society that was increasingly turning to individualist lifestyle choices in their domestic environments.

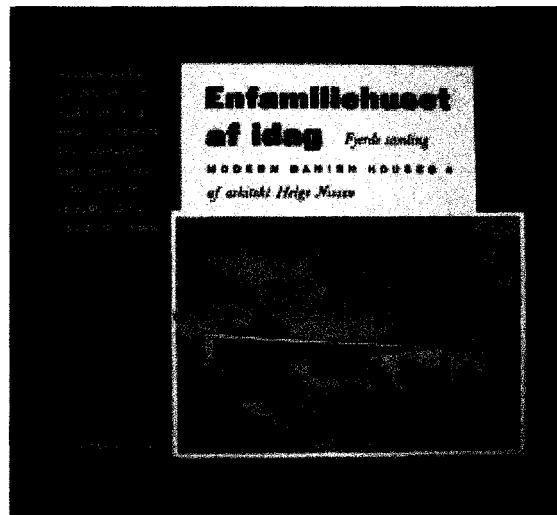


Fig. 4.19 A publication of a collection of Danish one-family houses (fourth collection), 1961. Such series of books informed a specialist architect readership that would be designing for private home owners during the 1950s and 1960s. The standard format included plan drawings and lay-out descriptions with photographs of the orientation and interiors of individual houses. The format continued into the 1970s for a growing consumer market and lay-readership in private housing. Helge Nissen, *Enfamiliehuset af idag*, Cph.: Høst og Søn, 1961. Author's collection.

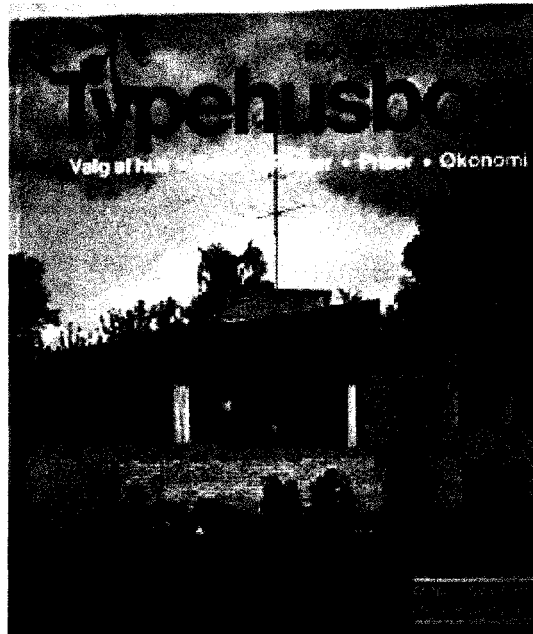


Fig. 4.20 The *Bo Bedre* type-house book, 1974. The book (one of a series published during the 1960s) continued the format established in the 1950s with descriptions of individual housing types, their sizes and lay-outs. Additional data on the companies offering such housing was now provided (architects became more anonymous contributors to the design of these private houses). Author's collection.

By the mid-1960s the NFDHA therefore geared up its publicity efforts: it was no longer thought sufficient to rely on local efforts in attracting a membership that was increasingly turning to private homeownership. It proposed firstly to create an 'enlightenment' fund, to support the training of residents' representatives in matters of policy and administration – and secondly to organise vigorous external publicity campaigns.⁵⁷ The NFDHA could still claim that collectively housing associations were the largest builders of housing in Denmark, but it needed to reinvigorate its image as the head of a modern housing movement that provided quality housing and social equity in its allocation.⁵⁸ Part of the image-lift included informing the housing 'consumer' on new housing types being built – a re-naming of the resident-citizen the housing movement had previously addressed through calls for social awareness and equity.⁵⁹ With growing public expectations for social housing to be larger and better-equipped, national and local campaigns were designed to show that social housing associations were fully capable of fulfilling residents' demands.

With the encouragement of the NFDHA Århusian social housing associations therefore deployed show homes for their latest housing projects. An early show home project appeared as the first stage of the 'South Jutland Plan' when it was opened in 1964 in Sønderborg in the south of Jutland.⁶⁰ The South Jutland plan was based on a modular construction system using slab blocks, which had been developed by a consortium of ten housing associations.⁶¹ This housing project was heavily promoted in the professional press, where it was interpreted as an ideal solution to the housing problem, providing flexible interior spaces that could be adjusted to changing household needs. The South Jutland Plan was promoted as a model of advances in system building. This first attempt at opening a series of variously sized flats to the public was limited to paying guests, resulting in only 3,000 visitors. Yet based on the perceived design success of the project a version was projected for the outskirts of Århus.

Thus when the South Jutland Plan came to Århus the emphasis on marketing was boosted further. The instigators of the system, a group of four housing associations based in the suburbs of Århus, adopted the rigorous marketing strategies encouraged by the NFDHA. A logo had been designed by the Federation, which stated *It is good to dwell well (Det er godt at bo godt)*, printed in the Danish national colours, red and white (Fig. 4.21).⁶² The logo appeared on flags and stickers, and promotional posters were designed that called for social housing to be children and family friendly (Fig. 4.22).⁶³ To supplement a local housing exhibition or event, a travelling exhibition was supplied by the NFDHA dealing with themes such as the housing problem and the problems facing the housing of young people. Leaflets, exhibition catalogues and newsletters were centrally produced, while publicity appeared in the local press.⁶⁴ The central offices of the NFDHA stressed that the co-ordination of show home displays should be managed locally. It aimed, through the housing exhibition and show home, at providing information, but the displays equally stressed the importance of housing associations as a real and effective solution to the provision of housing without the exploitation of speculation.⁶⁵



Fig. 4.21 The NFDHA logo, printed in the Danish national colours, white text on a red background. The logo was widely disseminated from the mid-1960s and has since appeared on most publicity material employed by the Danish housing associations. From *Boligforeningernes etagetypehuse*, exh. catalogue, Aabyhøjboligforening, n.d., Lokallhistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker.

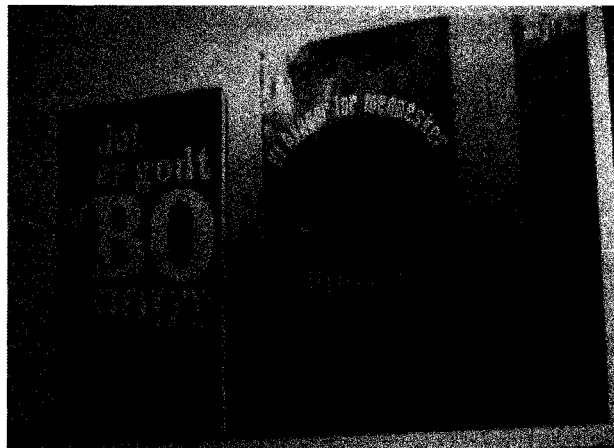


Fig. 4.22 A series of promotional posters supplied by the NFDHA and a local housing association. The central poster stresses that as a housing association 'We build for people – not for profit'. Poster display by Brabrand Boligforening used as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations. Brabrand Boligforening, archive.

So the *Syddjylland Plan* became transformed into the *Århus Plan*, or *Boligforeningernes etagetypehuse* ('The type-flat by social housing associations'), with 2,449 flats built in the first instance (Fig. 4.23).⁶⁶ Entrance to the show flats was free and with 75,000 visitors ensured its success. The Fordist housing project with its image of providing a mass produced democratic life style received a popular profile in the press. Not only the building

structures but also their standardised contents such as the NFDHA's standardised kitchen unit were celebrated (Fig. 4.24). *Boligen* was naturally delighted with the Århusian achievement. The quantity and variety of marketing efforts to promote the event had in any case been significant: large adverts had appeared in the national dailies, the illuminated news board in central Århus ran a campaign for six days, a well-illustrated catalogue had been printed, and the national press and television had given the event special attention.⁶⁷



Fig. 4.23 Frontispiece to the catalogue for the *Århus Plan*, c.1969. *Boligforeningernes Etagepæhus*, exh. catalogue, Aabyhøjboligforening, n.d., Lokalhistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker.

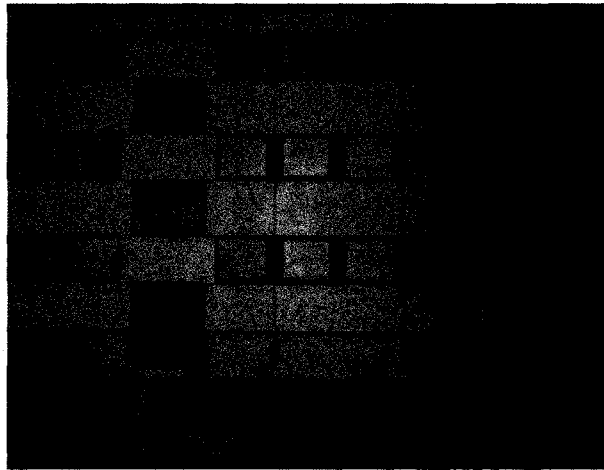


Fig. 4.24 Image of the façade to a typical block of system built flats, catalogue for the *Århus Plan*, c.1969. *Boligforeningernes Etagebyghuse*, exh. catalogue, Aabyhøj Boligforening, n.d., Lokalthistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker.

Thus the Danish social housing associations perceived the initial rewards of a proactive publicity effort. The turn towards marketing a generic modern life style evoked a sense of modernity in living that for the time being seemed to foster a positive image locally, suggesting nationally that housing associations were fully capable of rivalling the private sector in lifestyle choices for a diversity of working classes.⁶⁸ Promotional campaigns therefore became integral to new housing projects, while the message encompassed a compressed established views of social housing as increasingly focused around the individual. By the 1970s advertising by some Århusian housing associations reached levels equalling and possibly imitating cigarette and alcohol advertising, taking a further step towards using explicit commercial techniques (Fig. 4.25). The hope for a culture of promotion became embedded within the practices of housing associations at a time when the housing system was opening towards the resident as an active participant and decision maker.



Fig. 4.25 An advertising image used by AAB to promote the *Trillegårdsparken* housing area, Århus, 1974. The image shows sociable young adults sitting around a coffee table sharing a quiet drink. The caption ingenuously incorporates a modified version of the NFDHA's logo 'It is Good to Dwell Well', underlining the logo as a re-affirmation: 'we' (the residents) really are comfortable and sustained, living well in housing association dwellings ('Vi har det nu godt, når vi bor godt'). AAB, *Trillegårdsparken*, Århus: AAB, 1974 ⁶⁹

Newcastle: the ebbs and flows of promotional activity of social housing

Promotional campaigns in social housing projects in Newcastle also gained increasing purchase during the 1960s, if less so in the preceding decade. It has been suggested that the post-war urban planning and renewal that was organised within municipal-national government diminished citizenship in British cities.⁷⁰ However during and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War citizens in some British cities were encouraged to form opinions on matters relating to local government, town planning and urban reconstruction and the democratic process.⁷¹ This section will consider how and to what extent the idea of democracy was absorbed in Newcastle's post-war planning and housing projections. Although British democratic sentiment may have been appreciated abroad, examples of displays held locally in Newcastle will be studied in order to consider the level to which local architectural efforts and municipal strategies adopted the exhibition as a means of projecting certain meanings about social housing. It will furthermore consider whether they

in the process contemplated the implication for citizen enlightenment and the way this was integrated into social housing policy.

When notions of citizen enlightenment were successfully integrated into exhibition material, technical expertise noticed and admired the results abroad as has been shown. During war-time booklets had been distributed across Britain to encourage the formation of debating groups during wartime to further the education in citizenship, including titles such as *The Democratic Idea*, *Is Britain a Democracy?* and *Our Towns*.⁷² The intended readership such as the services, Women's Institutes, churches, and youth groups were encouraged to discuss topical political issues. Democracy emphasised its importance to their everyday lives: 'Democracy is a social matter. It is a philosophy of communal adventure. It is a design for living together.'⁷³ The reconstructed town of the post-war period was presented as an exemplar of the New Town idea, explained in the context of recent planning legislation. Community was a vital ingredient of the life-blood of post-war towns and housing areas, so the citizen-reader was reminded that they too played an important part in developing the political life of the city: 'Our towns must have keen and vigorous citizens, and secondly,as many common purposes as possible must be provided.'⁷⁴ Shared values and a consensus view on the modernisation and democracy throughout post-war British society, however general these were, were promoted as issues of importance for the individual.

Such national messages on citizenship and democracy were echoed and reinforced locally. The Commissioner of the Northern Region during the war, Sir Arthur Lambert, spoke in the Newcastle press on the benefits of local discussion groups in the social and civil service and in political organisations.⁷⁵ The public had a duty to become involved, to connect with local councillors, and to listen to BBC broadcasts in order to inform themselves. Citizens ought to engage with a series of priorities in the local political arena: Housing was of the uppermost importance, followed by industrial development, education, public transport and community centres, whilst sports facilities and children's play areas had lower priority. The tone was distinctly paternalistic, the 'duty' espoused seemed not to be naturally present in the population, but needed encouragement and nurture from above. This feeling was equally shared in the pages of the *Newcastle Plan* of 1945, which, as we have seen, was promoted as a model of civic management and future urban order (see chapter 3).

Indeed in the spirit of planning and post-war urban renewal the promotion of citizenship and civic engagement was further reinforced by a contemporary exhibition on local government and welfare provisions presented to the population of Newcastle. The exhibition was held at Newcastle City Bath Halls in October 1945, at a time when the *Newcastle Plan* was still fresh in the public's memory. It was prepared not by Newcastle Council, but by the National Association of Local Government Officers to inform residents on the functions of local government. A film entitled *Keystones of Civilisation* was shown that described the life-stages of a citizen from birth to adulthood. Panels showed the benefits of local government structure and its costs, illustrating to the visitor '.... that rates and taxes are no 'burden' but represent civilisation,' thus evoking the welfare of a civilised society as the ultimate goal to strive for.⁷⁶

The development of the city and its housing featured strongly in such educational strategies. Having recently recovered from war, British cities were still suffering from austerity and lack of materials, making initial reconstruction slow. Calls for resolve in the city's population, and the perceived need for citizen education, reflected that active citizenship, and the stable, ideal, community, which was intended to carry this democratic process further, were not naturally present but required cultivation. But nevertheless, Newcastle Council seemed not particularly active in fostering an active sense of citizenship. The Council did little to promote a popular language of urban modernisation during the immediate post-war period – although the publications of the city's plans of 1945 and 1953 may provide examples of an interest in a wider dissemination of civic activity. Even when proposals were made to provide public lectures on the 1945 *City Plan* by the City Engineer they were rejected on the grounds that he would be placed in the 'firing line' and although publicity would be beneficial there was a danger the *Plan* would be dismissed by the public.⁷⁷ Instead plans were most commonly interpreted by the press. It was to take another 14 years for Newcastle Council to distribute information about its planning decisions in a more accessible medium, the free monthly publication, *Civic News*, to be discussed later. Instead the Council invested its energies in its role as landlord and city builder, providing new housing estates to replace slums and planning large scale infrastructural plans. Newcastle Council thus adopted a technical role in housing provision that in the final count revealed ambiguity towards active communication with its public.

The pursuit of housing exhibitions in Newcastle: good taste, the home, housing and the city

And yet - Similarly to developments in planning cities such as Coventry there were embryonic signs that Newcastle Council was involved in educating citizens in urban developments or 'good' housing and urban living.⁷⁸ Although the display of furnished housing in fashionable styles had become an established convention in some social housing circles, it was only later, as the adoption of more rigorous marketing techniques were employed that Newcastle Council became more strategic in its outward projection of the city as a vital regional centre.⁷⁹ In the immediate post-war period the local authority instead facilitated ad hoc displays such as the educational design exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery in 1947, when the Council of Industrial Design (COID), arranged a display of Danish crafts and everyday domestic objects.⁸⁰ The history of architecture and design has provided accounts of the attempts by the design disciplines to educate the public in 'correct' and idealised notions of taste.⁸¹ In Britain one dimension of this was a desire by the professional design institutions to bolster British industry by persuading the public of the qualities of well-designed objects as well as enabling industry to apply modern forms to their manufactures.⁸² Equally, the principles of good design for living embodied in designs from Scandinavia provided didactic models that the British public might learn to admire and adopt.

Although show home exhibitions in council housing was a fledgling practice in early post-war Newcastle, there were signs that the public did not always take kindly to being educated on how to set up home, when it was the actual availability of that home that was at stake:

Sir, I see that the City Council has furnished a home in Silverhill Drive and invite young couples to view. Perhaps they can tell us when we'll receive these houses? I have been married since 1942 and don't need the Council to tell me how to spend my units or what furniture I need. I've plenty in storage. All I need is a house. – Yours etc., Fed Up, High Heaton.⁸³

From this point of view, the dire need for housing in Newcastle overrode consumer advice. Yet despite such complaints Newcastle Council supported the 1947 exhibition of Scandinavian design for the home. The COID had collaborated with the Society of Danish Handicrafts and Industrial Art on a travelling exhibition containing household items such as

pottery and stainless steel utensils, furniture from well-known manufacturers such as Fritz Hansen and the 'good design' styles manufactured by FDB (*Forenede Danske Brugsforeninger*), the Danish Co-operative Society (Fig. 4.26).⁸⁴ The didactic ingredient of the display contained a comparative frame from which spectators could measure their own domestic setting.⁸⁵ The exhibition aimed '....to give a picture of how a Dane earning about £500 a year can furnish a modest home.' During a period when British designers took a keen interest in Scandinavian crafts, design and architecture, the issue of popular education in taste was clearly a shared concern with the Danish. The educational message here promoted rational consumption within the home, facilitated by the Council. Little connection was made to the social life in the wider housed community.

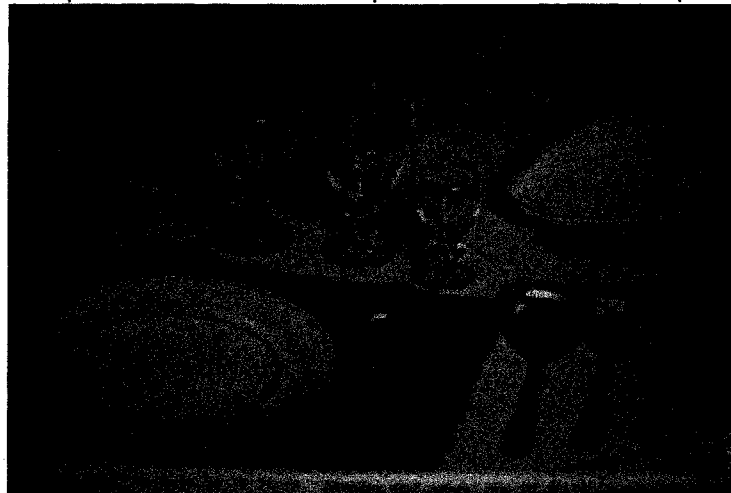


Fig. 4.26 Tableware display; photograph from the catalogue of the 1947 exhibition catalogue *An Exhibition of Danish Domestic Design*, The Laing Art Gallery.

Since domestic design displays were particularly successful with the general public and the Newcastle press, the COID made effective use of it in the North East region in connection with the promotion of new possibilities for housing at the New Town, Peterlee. New Towns were apt locations for starting a new life afresh for the local community, and an ideal moment for design educationalists to reach a large audience. The display of modern design for the home caused a stir in the local community when a COID interior designer, with the apposite name Psyche Pririe, dressed up a selection of show homes in Peterlee, which were on view for the residents of surrounding mining villages:

What they saw was as different from the old conception of a miner's home as crystal is from coal..... It was breath-taking, but because it was a break in everything they had seen, everything traditional...slightly shocking. ... Mrs. Pirie was content and the members of the Peterlee Corporation were content: they hadn't perhaps, expected to convert their future tenants to advanced interior decorating, well.... not in one afternoon. But they had sent them away with new ideas, ideas of colour which will be part and parcel of every home built for the 30,000 future inhabitants of the new town.⁸⁶

If the pedagogical effects of exhibitions had engaged the attention of Danish architects and the British design reformers of the COID, the educational forms were also similar. By drawing attention to particular themes the exhibitors could stress the value of modern changes in the material environment of the home and in the process project an idea of the home as a democratic space.

Yet the cultural distance between London based design interests and their northern audiences revealed the tension in formulating modern towns in a suburban idiom in the face of a conservative local community.⁸⁷ Moreover it highlighted a turn towards home-centredness and ignored issues of community that were considered to be tied up in environmental designs such as the neighbourhood unit. Tenants or residents, whether living in social or privately owned housing, were generally subjected to similar messages in the displays. This consensus approach was to change in the 1960s with the advent of a growing differentiation between suburban homeowners and council tenants in Newcastle. The differentiation was made visible by the greater number of system built housing units in social housing than in private ownership. These visible changes in the urban fabric were to become part of Newcastle Council's strategy to promote its urban modernisation. The show home became a vehicle of mediation for Newcastle Council, employing similar methods to those learnt in Peterlee, as well as absorbing the experiences learnt from local private and public architects' promotional strategies.

Local architectural concerns

In addition to their perceived roles as public educators the architectural and design professions were concerned with their roles as educators of the general public they also maintained professional standards through general information in the architectural press. The British architectural press covered a large geographic area, and so relatively rarely

engaged with housing or civic building in Newcastle. Instead the area had its own regional architectural society, the Northern Architectural Association (NAA), which annual reviews and a periodical, *The Northern Architect* from the early 1960s.⁸⁸ The NAA advised on professional practice and the continuing professional development of local architects in the Northern region.

As a further contribution to the professional discourse of architecture anniversary celebrations marked out distinct moments when architectural organisations could present themselves and their work to the general public. In 1958 the NAA hosted the centenary events for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), when it put on a series of lectures and an exhibition, *Architecture and You*, at Newcastle's Laing Art Gallery. The NAA's primary concern was nurturing its members' professional standing, but employed the RIBA Centenary celebration to issue public information more widely. George Kenyon, the Newcastle City Architect, was a member of the exhibition team, which organised the display into themes ranging from public works - such as town planning and housing, schools and hospitals - to private housing and industrial projects.⁸⁹ Publicity leaflets were widely distributed and a press conference was held. Public lectures included themes such as the introduction to Modern architecture, housing layout, 'Subtopia' (i.e. the topical problem of urban sprawl), and the shopping centre emphasising the general modernity of contemporary architectural developments. Tours to historical and industrial sites around the North East region on the other hand anchored architecture in a historically specific locality. A keen audience also attended a lecture series on *The Architects and the Community*. Less explicitly concerned with the actual pedagogic techniques of display, the NAA concluded that the event had been successful, with 14,000 visitors to the exhibition in Newcastle. The display travelled to other cities in the northern region and reached a substantial audience across the North East and Cumbria.⁹⁰ Thus a single promotional event projected the importance of architects to society – whether as purveyors of social housing or industry the public was reassured of professional expertise.

The local press was delighted with the RIBA exhibition. It praised both the contemporary aspects of the display, and celebrated the region's building heritage. *The Journal* reiterated the educational objectives of the exhibition organisers, suggesting that public interest might be kindled to spark useful discussion on architectural issues:

... what are the chances that we shall be able to move towards the formation of a new tradition within which our architects can work securely, yet without losing the spirit of adventure which will make their work exciting as well as seemly to look at?..... If such a crystallisation is desirable, it might well be helped along if the public could make their own contribution to the debate. The architect needs not only enlightened employers but a suitable social climate in which to work.⁹¹

With its interest in the popular mediation of architecture the association seemed to pave the way for the publicity campaigns that were adopted by Newcastle City Council in the 1960s. Here was a way to inspire local patriotism in the lay-public if the housing authorities could only incorporate the methods into their housing strategies.

Newcastle Council increases its publicity effort

It was in the spirit of information dissemination and forming public opinion that Newcastle City Council was to consider and eventually establish a Public Relations Department. Only through educational campaigns might a popular acceptance of modernisation processes taking place in the city be harnessed. It has been suggested that Newcastle Council did not have a coherent marketing policy in the 1960s - it instead relied on the visions of urban progress held by the Labour Leader T. Dan Smith.⁹² His visions of Newcastle as the Brasilia of the North, that would be increasingly compatible with other European cities, was to combine an entrepreneurial enthusiasm for urban progress with a personal projection of authority in local government.⁹³ Newcastle was projected as the capital of the Tyneside region, and the regionalist project of the city's Labour Party in the early 1960s was reinforced by a rhetorical focus on the advances the city could make, in the project to ameliorate industrial decline in the area.⁹⁴

Thus social housing became one such device to describe the progressive vision of Newcastle Council. The following section examines some of the techniques deployed by the Council and its Town Planning and Housing Committees to further the wider acceptance of urban renewal that was becoming one of its key priorities during the 1960s. Some of these efforts seem quite systematic and reveal a conscious decision to boost urban promotion. Council housing became a tool in shaping the Council's social and urban reform and modernisation goals that bore traces of earlier strategies of exhibition and display. Promotional efforts may inform local citizens on Council activities, but they also presented the social housing services with a means to educate and suggest to tenants ideals of good neighbourliness.

It could be suggested that the early post-war period had seen only fragmented information on local government and urban planning. From the late 1950s onwards a turn towards a more systematic approach to information dissemination took place. One example of regular promotional publicity media in Newcastle was the information bulletin, the *Civic News*, which came out monthly from 1959 (Fig. 4.27). This municipal newsletter was described as an adjunct to the local press, and focused exclusively on the Council's work and services. It became a medium for the Council to display its achievements in an optimal light during the urban modernisation projects of the 1960s. The bulletin was available to the public at libraries and usually featured significant developments in the Council's housing construction and revitalisation schemes. The *Civic News* became an important vehicle for municipal self-aggrandizement, civic pride and local patriotism espoused from within the Council – a message that was similarly employed by the commercial bodies of the city for the wider dissemination of ideas about Newcastle as a dynamic centre of progress (Fig. 4.28).

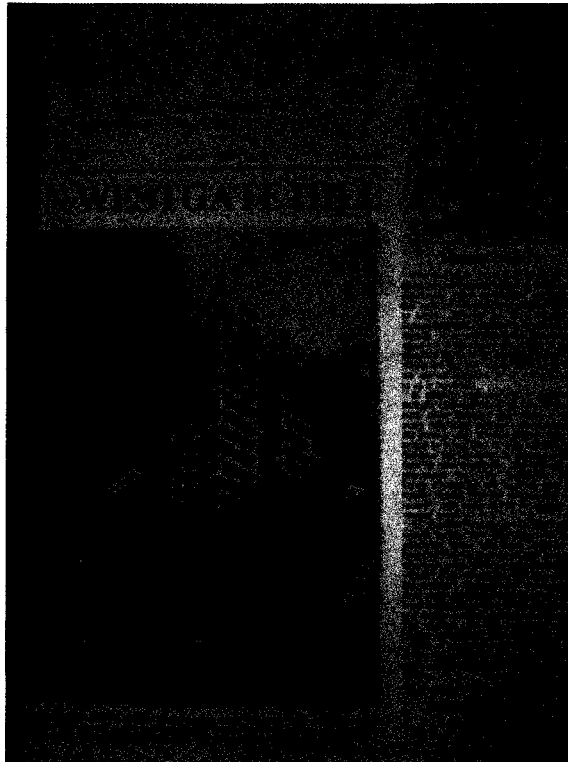


Fig. 4.27 *Civic News*, May 1964. The front page featured one of three newly constructed twenty storey flats on the Westgate Road, that housed a show home exhibition on public view, described as the 'new and dominating feature of the city's changing skyline'. *Civic News*, Newcastle Council, May 1964.

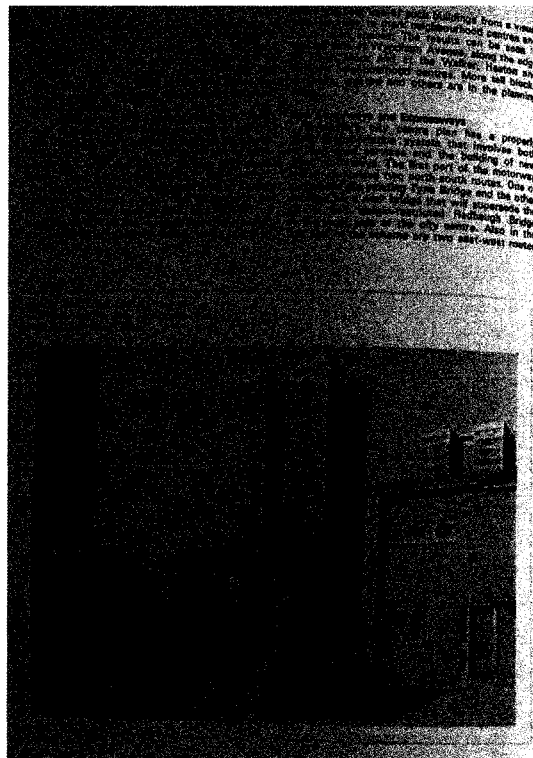


Fig. 4.28 The housing developments off the Westgate Road as illustrated in the *Newcastle upon Tyne Official Industrial & Commercial Guide* (c.1967). As well as being a list of businesses in the city, the publication described Newcastle as a thriving industrial city impressing the reader with municipal urban renewal projects such as Cruddas Park, civic monuments such as the Civic Centre, public transport and other Council services. *Newcastle upon Tyne Official Industrial & Commercial Guide*, n.d. (c.1967)

Key messages in Newcastle's external publicity campaign

It has become commonplace to confirm that T. Dan Smith's leadership brought a dimension of entrepreneurialism to Newcastle City Council's self-promotion. With ambitions of regional dominance the city worked to entice industrial expansion during a time of industrial decline.⁹⁵ The city and the Tyneside region had not yet achieved the late modern shifts toward an expansive service sector employment structure that was to affect its later socio-cultural constitution. Instead the promotion of new industrially based jobs grew in the mid-1960s, boosted by regionalist policies.⁹⁶ The visual image of progressive council housing especially suggested local people would benefit materially from these new sources of regional finance. Thus the Council's *Civic News* and the local press repeatedly employed images of upward thrusting tower block as powerful symbols of modernity and progress. Tower blocks standing on hills (three blocks for example stood imposingly on the skyline of

the Westgate Road), or in large groups such as Cruddas Park, could be represented, less as people's homes, but as monuments to the Council's visionary aims for the future.

One Proctor and Gamble advertisement published in the national press, for example, celebrated a local initiative embodied in the development of the new towns of Killingworth and Cramlington (Fig. 4.29). Such development was aligned with hard work and industry, and major industrial manufacturing firms that were moving to the area were highlighted, including ICI, Rolls Royce, Formica and Proctor and Gamble themselves. The regional temperament and character was celebrated for its inventiveness and diligence, all of which combined to make the region and its capital the centre of growth and optimism: 'You'll be very welcome – but *don't* come expecting bleak faces and dismay...' ⁹⁷ New towns, new housing, new industries – the North East with Newcastle at its centre looked forward to new citizens and future progress.

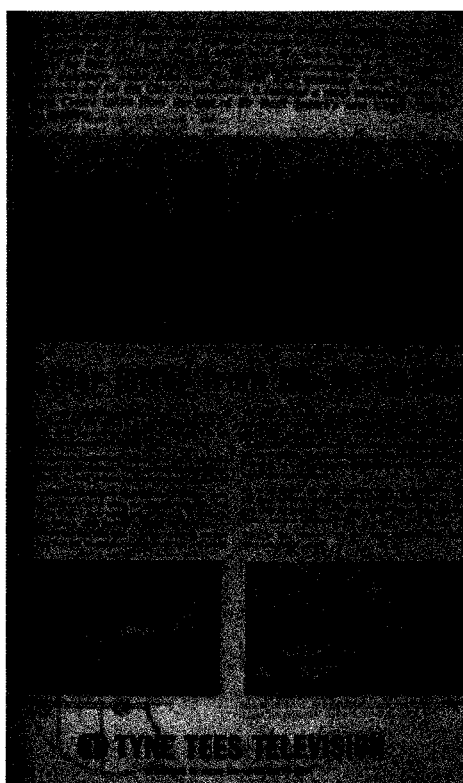


Fig. 4.29 *Civic News*, March, 1963 proudly reprinted a Proctor and Gamble/Tyne Tees Television advertisement from *The Guardian* newspaper on the benefits of living in Newcastle for potential future employees, listing a series of companies that had recently moved to the region. The image showed a bird's eye view of Newcastle incorporating the new Civic Centre as well as modern industrial buildings. The North East was described as 'virile,' leaving readers in no doubt of the strength and future potency of an energetic and dynamic region in growth. *Civic News*, Newcastle Council, March, 1963.

Beyond the city similar messages were used by Newcastle City Council to represent its progressive image. Images of housing and urban progress became cultural symbols of the weight Newcastle carried in the region. A three dimensional model had been built describing the plans for the city centre, designed in an international modern architectural idiom. The model was taken to various fairs in London and internationally.⁹⁸ If renovating old housing stock or building new homes were promoted within the city, the metropolitan and international arenas would receive a view of Newcastle as a significant modern city. When for a second time a Newcastle Civic delegation visited Århus during the British Week of 1964, the model was on display at the Town Hall, albeit very little else was noted of this visit.⁹⁹ The model of the central city area was also represented in the annual updates

of the *Official Guide* from the mid-1960s (Fig. 4.30). When the *Official City Guide* for Newcastle was re-designed in 1964 predictive symbols of the positive urban developments waiting in store for the city were revealed. By 1969 the *Official Guide* was enthusiastically celebrating the city's achievements supported by images of modern council housing and central urban developments (Fig. 4.31).¹⁰⁰ The *Guides* were used as civic presents to Newcastle's official guests, or for hosts when Newcastle delegates visited abroad. For some Council members the Newcastle Guide paled into shameful insignificance in comparison with the books and leaflets received from European cities such as Rotterdam and Hanover.¹⁰¹ Only in the immediate confrontation of an official international civic meeting could the quality of Newcastle's promotion be gauged. Indeed the affective sense of civic pride was for some vulnerable to such rare moments of comparative insight. The promotional impulse of the Council seemed fragile and pointed to the need for further work and development if it was to become a strategy that rang true for more than a few enterprising city leaders.

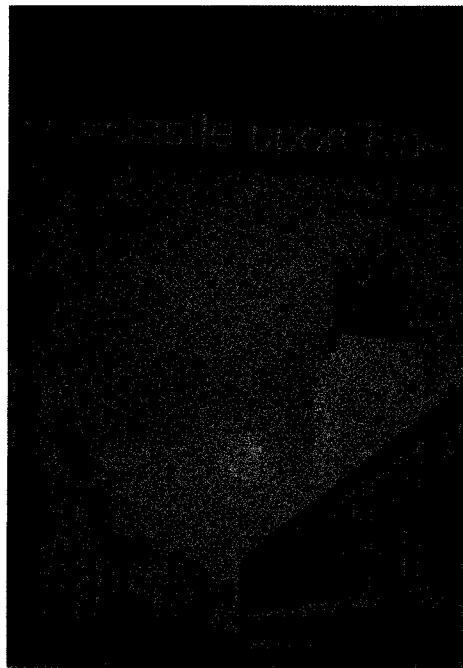


Fig. 4.30 Newcastle upon Tyne's *Official Guide* (1969) showing the recently opened Civic Centre with its tower adorned with a seahorse embellished structure hiding the glockenspiel that played tunes with a regional emphasis. The Civic Centre was the home of the City Council, a symbol of power and civic pride, which in the 1970s became a sign of local government distance and bureaucratic disinterestedness in residents' lives (see chapter 5.). Local History Collection, Newcastle Library.

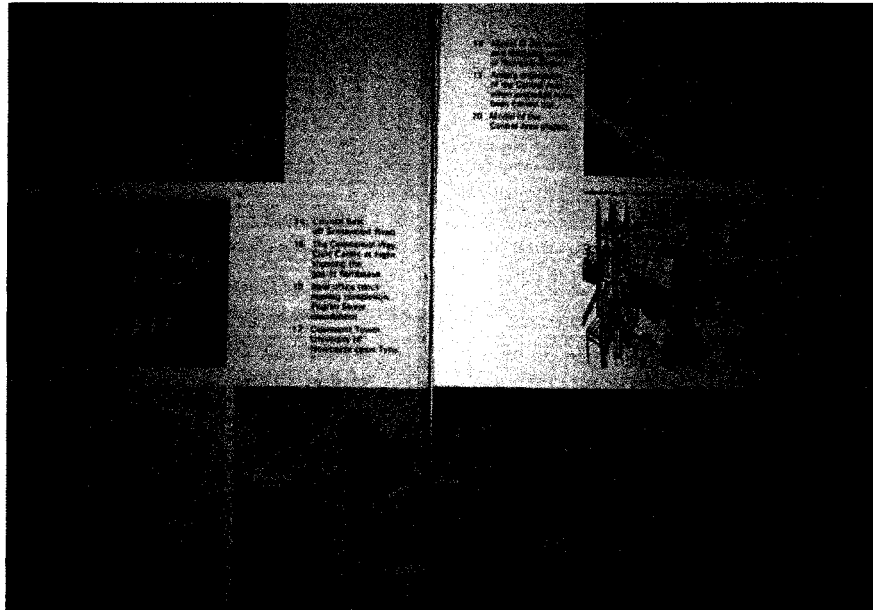


Fig. 4.31 The Newcastle upon Tyne *Official Guide* for 1965-66, images included the Cruddas Park tower block estate, the three dimensional planning model of Newcastle's city centre, and an artist's impression of the central city plans, a night time photograph of the Civic Centre and modern office blocks and university buildings. Local History Collection, Newcastle Library.

The show home as policy vehicle

Albeit messages of municipal grandeur seemed fragile in the outward projection of urban expansion messages, the inward concerns to improve the housing conditions of Newcastle's residents were anchored in the inter-relationship between the policies of publicity and housing policy. The *Newcastle Looks Ahead* display in 1961 sought to promote progressive planning policies and project future visions of the city for a local audience. Reacting to the troubling contraction of its economic base the exhibition projected town planning and housing visions as proud manifestations of the city's refreshed image (Fig. 4.32). It was suggested that Newcastle should cease its parochial thinking. Instead competition with other cities was a factor to consider, in the struggle to entice new types of industry to move to the region. One of the means would be the future redevelopment plans for the city, the arts and architecture.¹⁰² As a public statement on the exhibition suggested:

It is felt that the City must recognise that in the second half of the twentieth century, with the changing pattern of basic industries in the area, it is more than ever necessary that Newcastle upon Tyne should demonstrate to the whole country

and to other communities in the European free trade area that not only is Tyneside capable of extending many of its existing commercial and industrial facilities, but that it is also a centre in which large new industrial developments would flourish.¹⁰³

It is however ironic that the attempt to offer an international perspective drew attention to the dangers of limited parochial views. Despite progressive images of social housing in Newcastle the process of modernisation would still require the consent of its residents. Furthermore the outside world would need to be persuaded of the value of the city.¹⁰⁴ As will be seen in the next chapter social housing became a contested terrain amongst council tenants and their neighbours. Within the Council objections to the exhibition included fears that it was too rushed, and ultimately a waste of resources in the face of real housing need.¹⁰⁵ Even before a general acceptance of urban public relations could take place, the tension between image and reality was rearing its head.



Fig. 4.32 Labour Leader of Newcastle Council, T. Dan Smith, shows Dame Evelyn Sharpe, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, a model tower block at the 1961 *Newcastle Looks Ahead* exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery. From M. Glendinning and S. Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1996, p.181

Despite the problem of defending the spending of revenue accounts on this promotional exhibition, a local publicity company was commissioned by Newcastle City Council for a trial year in 1961 to investigate the benefits of systematic public information distribution.¹⁰⁶ Amongst its tasks J.K.T. Public Relations managed the official opening of new council flats, and produced the publicity material for the *Newcastle Looks Ahead* exhibition.

The persuasive powers of exhibitions seemed clear. On opening the exhibition Dame Evelyn Sharpe, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, congratulated the Council for taking the public 'into its confidence'.¹⁰⁷ The City centre redevelopment plans were the exhibition's central focus, but models of point blocks featured strongly. During the weeks of the exhibition the three point blocks at Shieldfield were opened to the public, where a furnished show home flat was put on display - almost belonging to the 'space age' according to the local press. There seemed no doubt that the show had been popular, with large numbers of visitors and an international audience. Indeed from the moment of the exhibition the show flat became a device for promoting new and progressive ways of living under the banner of Newcastle Council. The show home from now on became a way of demonstrating the efficiency and extent of the Council's building programme, as well as allowing the possibilities of engineering an environment in which tenants could adopt the ideals and aspirations of modern living.

Representatives from Parliament, and civic dignitaries were present at the opening of the new tower blocks at Shieldfield. The housing type was seen as a model of future developments - they were a 'spectacular advance in the Housing Committee's vast programme of re-housing on modern lines.'¹⁰⁸ The leader of the Labour Party was evoked as continuing a great building tradition in the city - claiming to unify local history and pride, industrial achievement and the interests of working men:

Coun. Dan Smith, who will surely rank with Dobson and Grainger as builders of the city, his colleagues, the City Architect and his team, Messrs. Leslie & Co, and the men with the calloused hands who have laid the bricks and poured the cement - have all played their part with tremendous team spirit in this great adventure.¹⁰⁹

Yet at the event itself the men with calloused hands remained elusive.

The show home and opening rituals became features of Newcastle's housing policy as a means of converting working class tenants to new ways of living. The Housing Committee's collaborative work with J.K.T. was thought exemplary and seemed to promise a fresh means of communicating with tenants on new estates. The company for example produced an innovative information leaflet on local amenities for newly re-housed residents on the Newbiggin Hall council estate:

It is comparatively rare for a local authority to go to the trouble to describe in such a comprehensive yet readable way the work it has done and is still doing on a particular housing estate. All too often people are moved to new surroundings after little more than cursory official notification.¹¹⁰

Council show homes were therefore opened across the city as new flats were erected. Accounting for the policy of publicly displaying furnished flats the Housing Committee optimistically intended that the show home would become a facet in encouraging a trickle up process, of making larger family houses available as flats attracted new tenants. The Director of Housing hoped that show homes would become ideal models for tenants to aspire to, reflecting the professional housing manager's continuing need to monitor tenant behaviour:

In order to increase the general interest in 'High Flats' I would suggest that one be suitably furnished and kept vacant for approved applicants and existing tenants to visit, and so that members of the Council and departmental staff can introduce people to this type of flat.

Alternatively, an annual exhibition could be held by the Housing Management Committee, displaying the benefits of this type of accommodation, together with the issue of a descriptive brochure.¹¹¹

Married to the practicalities of housing policy was the affective sense of creating feelings of belonging to a particular place in the city. At openings of new flats local pride could be evoked. The Lord Mayor, Alderman Dr. Henry Russell opened a block of flats in Walker and called for tenants to nurture their pride in the city. By building modern flats the city was contributing positively to the amelioration of slum living, adding a boost to the civic pride of citizens. The press noted:

.....Dr. Russell said that everyone was entitled to a house of his own. 'It is remarkable,' he said, 'that we have so many people who are still proud of

Newcastle, but are living in slums. 'We hope people will be proud of these flats, and will retain their pride by looking after them.'¹¹²

The new housing symbolically embodied the large and complex processes of urban modernisation, which through promotional efforts were translated into a feeling of civic pride. This contradicted or underrated the actual hardship of people living in slums, yet feeling a local bond that was slipping away (see chapter 5 and 6). It was truly a remarkable feat for citizens to feel civic pride when they continued to live in squalid housing.

Other promotional activities on behalf of council housing improvements

For the more affluent council tenant on the other hand the Parker Morris standard housing in Kenton North was presented as a more attractive solution. The availability of such high rent council housing had aroused suspicion to the political right of the Council, whilst Labour required evidence to legitimise building higher standard housing. The Housing Management Committee therefore commissioned a bus containing photographs, plans and layout drawings as well as three-dimensional models of the estate.¹¹³ The bus would travel around the city, to show local residents the city's development plans. They could then express their desire for a new council home, and the amount they would be willing to pay in order to achieve higher housing standards. Councillors referred obliquely to commercial strategies of selling the idea of new housing through show homes. It was claimed that the success of this display had ensured that tenants were now happy in their new flats:

....these types of exhibitions are very important indeed. We are offering to the citizens of Newcastle a new way of living; a new type of accommodation which they have not known for years; entirely different from living in up-and-down flats, or in slums. We did have in Shieldfield an exhibition for the multi-storey flats because people in Shieldfield had grave doubts about moving into this type of building. They knew it was an entirely new way of living. They had never envisaged living 15 storeys up.¹¹⁴

The initial promotion of the new housing at Kenton Bar was directed at persuading the affluent sections of future tenants to take an interest in the site. In addition the architecture of the estate was intended to display to visitors to the city the fine contribution to Newcastle's housing made possible by the Council. Placed near the road linking the airport and city, visitors driving past would be given 'a favourable impression with a well laid-out housing estate,' a Council strategy approved of on both sides of the political divide.¹¹⁵

Again the press was enthusiastic, claiming the Kenton Bar housing estate was ideal for family living, praising the amenities within and predicting a well-designed landscape surrounding the houses. The core audience for this house type was the tenant who aspired to fill their house with consumer durables: there was space for a washing machine, a refrigerator, and wiring was provided for television sets. The press reiterated the aims of the Council: in order to provide Council housing from below, those tenants who wanted to upgrade their homes would be prioritised, although tenants being re-housed from clearance schemes or from the waiting list could also apply.¹¹⁶

In older housing areas housing on the other hand renewal became another dimension of Council policy that attempted to encourage compliant citizen behaviour. While the Council was building thousands of new homes, a leaflet was produced inviting private homeowners to join the Council in giving their neighbourhood a 'face-lift.'¹¹⁷ There was no compulsory mechanism to force house owners to follow the advice, but suggestions were put forward on tree planting, building playgrounds, repairing or removing walls (Fig. 4.33 and 3.34). The leaflets deployed a 'before and after' device in photographic form that showed the typical bye-law streets of Tyneside flats contrasted with contemporary housing types, i.e. the newly built tower blocks of the West End of Newcastle.

It is in the final count difficult to estimate the effect of such leaflets on the city's residents. Whilst the leaflet provided written information on revitalisation, other visual displays reinforced the Council's modernisation efforts including both an exhibition and the opening of a show home. Barclays Bank on Northumberland Street in the central shopping area of Newcastle, provided space for the Housing Committee's '*Better Homes*' display during April 1961.¹¹⁸ Both exhibitions were well visited, with a total of 29,968 visitors.¹¹⁹ For three weeks during the same period the results of a house conversion were shown in Joseph Street, while a year later the Housing Committee deployed the make-over strategy by showing a modernised house with new kitchen and bathroom fittings, standing next to an untouched house, yet to be revitalised.¹²⁰ By reaching the citizens of the city through a variety of means and repeatedly reiterating their modernisation message, Newcastle City Council and the Housing Committee in particular, was attempting to achieve a multi-layered package of information, always aiming at a positive public response to its activities.



Figs. 4.33 and 4.34 Cover image and a set of 'before and after' illustrations of proposed modernisation projects for privately owned housing in streets with Tyneside flats in need of revitalisation. Newcastle Housing Committee, *New Homes for Old in a way that you can afford!* Newcastle: Newcastle Council, n.d.

Comparative implications

This chapter has examined examples of promotional activity in Århus and Newcastle relating to social housing and urban development in order to consider the wider dissemination of values within social housing to popular and professional audiences. In

both cities the discourse of social housing clearly circulated a diversity of messages that required dissemination from the central housing authority to a mass audience reading the local press, visiting exhibition halls or show homes in new housing areas. Professionals, housing officials and managers - the democratically elected representatives of local government and their leaders - sought knowledge on social housing systems from a variety of sources at their disposal, and the movement of the social housing narrative became dynamic and diffusive, involving mechanisms that fed back information to sources for revision, changing meanings over time. The professional press, the conference and the professional study visit, whether at home or abroad, were dimensions of the housing discourse, which were accessible to the housing representatives in both Århus and Newcastle. They allowed managerial, governmental and lay actors to absorb or reject housing events as meaningful in their local contexts at home. It is the context of the local arena that reveals the divergences in appropriation of social housing cultures that were projected through exhibition and conference events.

Civic Leaders took up the responsibility for spreading the housing message to citizens. As accountable, elected Leaders during a time of highly visible housing need and budding welfare provisions their promotional efforts spoke of the supportive clientilism that seemed to call for consensus and consent from the public.¹²¹ The exhibition and display practices of the housing authorities in Århus and Newcastle described above suggests that their strategies of promotion carried similar messages to local audiences who were impatient for new housing. To evoke a sense of civic pride civic Leaders in both cities drew attention to the size and significance of the city in the regional context. At the same time citizens should be aware of the role they could play in building up the new urban environments. Messages included both the idea of democracy as a sphere of information exchange and discussion, and in addition somewhat ambiguously suggested that citizenship involved accepting patiently and compliantly the given local government structures that would eventually carry out the modernisation of the cities needed - a message the Mayor of Århus stressed as he faced the implications of a growing need for competing public services at a time of financial austerity.

The information given on housing and town planning aimed to reinforce and bring to the fore the contribution both municipalities were making in building modern welfare cities.

During the 1950s Newcastle saw similar exhibition strategies taking place as in Århus, but they were most commonly organised by non-Council institutions. Although urban modernisation was assumed to be a central concern, there was little inclination by the Council to nurture citizen involvement in Newcastle in contrast to other British cities.¹²² Only from 1958, with the appointment of a Labour led Council, did the emphasis shift towards public awareness campaigns. Thus, although the process of boosting Århus' and Newcastle's civic pride through promotional activities was to some extent ad hoc, there are signs that Newcastle's promotional activity grew increasingly focused in the 1960s. Promotional campaigns may not have been systematically targeted, but at the very least the conscious use of advertising companies and commercial campaigning styles were becoming acceptable.¹²³

Boosterism for Newcastle was grounded in the awareness of the city and its region's economic fragility. On the one hand the city's council housing system contained tenants that seemed to require persistent encouragement and education in good tenant behaviour - and the show home might be one way for the Council to promote the message of tidy modern living in new system built housing. On the other hand de-industrialisation of the city provided the backdrop for the visions of regional and urban modernisation that T. Dan Smith and his Council propounded: the tower blocks of the 1960s became symbols of progress and hope. This contrasted with Århus Council's strategy, which did not use advertising, nor did it conceive of using such tactics during a period of national economic expansion. Housing promotion in Århus was distinct from tourist promotion in the city, which did have the backing of the Council.¹²⁴ When Århus received the 'Europe Prize' in 1961 it was the first city in Scandinavia to be honoured in this way. Although trade was mentioned as part of its celebration, the internationalist ambitions for education and culture seemed equally, if not more significant.¹²⁵ Its housing progress was instead promoted through housing associations.

In Århus, as in Newcastle, the new mass-produced blocks of flats reflected modernity and progress, but also embodied notions of the collective responsibilities of the housing movement, values of a shared and socially just housing system. Instead of relying on local authority support Århusian housing associations accepted the need to employ marketing style techniques for their cost-rental housing that resembled commercial methods during the mid to late 1960s. Complying with the NFDHA's promotional policy, they to a certain

extent fused the uneasy alliance of philosophy of egalitarian housing with the world of competition and commerce. As Danish affluence increased in the 1960s it was the social housing associations that perceived a need to strengthen their legitimacy, and they deployed strategies that echoed the marketing language of the commodified housing sector, reflecting a level of ambivalence in their position between state and market. Newcastle's Council tenants were in comparison given little sense of being part of a greater housing movement, but were called upon as party political support in Council elections.¹²⁶ Although the visual language of modernity signalled in Århus and Newcastle were quite similar, the structural and cultural basis was different as will become clear in the thesis overall.

If Newcastle Council was attempting to make a coherent effort at place promotion in the 1960s through its public relations work, Århus did not use a similar system. Instead it seems to have relied on one-off events such as the second British Week that took place across Danish cities in 1964 to make an impact. Århus had no decline in its industrial base equivalent to the situation in Newcastle in the 1960s. Its industries were already diversified, while the Danish economy over-all was experiencing an industrial up-swing during that decade.¹²⁷ Århus also did not plan for a major over-haul of its city centre or planned slum clearance and revitalisation schemes on a similar scale to Newcastle. There had been suggestions to clear the city centre of older building stock to provide a central arterial road to improve access to central business and shopping quarters in the early 1950s, but the proposal was never implemented, instead ring roads were planned as semi-circles well outside of the city's core.¹²⁸

Industrial cities have from the late nineteenth century been employing systems of information such as the press, to celebrate their progress. Yet, as cities such as Newcastle came to experience the negative consequences of industrial decline and economic recession during the twentieth century, their strategies turned to advertising and fledgling marketing techniques to attract new industries and residents to their area.¹²⁹ This would often take place in competition with other neighbouring cities and towns, and certainly can be seen to be contested in the city's own housing areas. That both Newcastle and Århus partook in various promotional strategies in the mid to late twentieth century - at different times, and with differences in their emphases on the cultural or historical particularity of the cities and their housing is clear. Some arose from a civic interest in public education as well as from the interests of existing commercial groups and

associations. In Newcastle in particular, it was hoped this urban promotion would boost the city's image in order to attract new investment from outside interests. Århus was from the later 1950s undergoing a period of rapid industrial expansion and seemed not to need such externally focused marketing strategies.

Up to now the Århusian housing associations have been described as playing a key role across the urban democratic landscape, in contrast with Newcastle Council's centralised role. Yet in both cases the hegemonic intention of shaping a smooth process of modernisation motivated both housing and local authorities to employ promotional schemes. How residents in the cities negotiated these messages is another project. Maybe citizens did not as a whole absorb messages on participation, not even in Denmark where the institutional forms of social housing associations would have allowed it. A group of now elderly women residents who had lived most of their lives in a post-war Århusian housing area protested that they were never keen on attending their association's general meetings, and focused more closely on the home and family life.¹³⁰ And certainly one council tenant in Newcastle was fully devoted to her family during its early life in a brand new house on the Newbiggin Hall estate in the early 1960s, concerned with household budgets, part time work, school activities and child care.¹³¹ It is now time to turn to the voices who set themselves up as alternatives to the official discourse of housing that rang through the exhibition strategies: the voices of tenants and residents contesting through housing action the established social housing provisions in Århus and Newcastle.

¹ G. Kearns and C. Philo (eds.), *Selling Places. The City as Cultural Capital, Past and Present*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993; S.V. Ward and J.R. Gold (eds.), *Place Promotion. The Use of Publicity and Marketing to sell Towns and Regions*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1994; S. V. Ward, *Selling Places. The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities*, London: E & FN Spon, 1998; H. Smyth, *Marketing the City. The role of flagship developments in urban regeneration*, London: E & FN Spon, 1994; Peter J. Larkham and Keith Lilley, Plans, planners and city images: place promotion and civic boosterism in British reconstruction planning, *Urban History*, 2003, 30, (2), p.183-205

² Phil Hubbard, Lucy Faire and Heith Lilley, Contesting the modern city: reconstruction and everyday life in post-war Coventry, *Planning Perspectives*, 2003, (18), p.381-382; N. Tiratsoo, The Construction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-55: Myths and Reality, *Contemporary British History*, 2000, 14, (1), p.39-41

³ Cited in a speech by Flemming Grut, the Chair of Danske Arkitekters Landsforbund (Federation of Danish Architects), 10.03.56, *Arkitektens Ugehæfte*, 1956, 58, p.101:

Men det er jo vores faglige pligt at virke for en stadig forbedring af boligerne og boligvanerne; vi er i den henseende en slags missionærer, og det er ikke ufarligt.

[Transl. But it is our professional duty to work towards a continuous improvement of housing and the habits of [living in] housing. We are in this respect a type of missionaries and that is not harmless].

P. Rowe, *Modernity and Housing*, MIT Press, 1995, esp. 35-37; p.209-210

⁴ I suggest that this idea of a Danish 'housing culture' arose with the spread of Central European Modernism during the 1920s, when the German concept of *Wohnkultur* arose. However a deeper study of the use of the word would be necessary to confirm this, work that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁵ Edvard Heiberg was a particularly vociferous proponent on architectural involvement in politics. See his *2 Værelser Straks*, Cph.: Mondes Forlag A/S, 1935, and his contributions in *Arkitektens Ugehæfte*, 1947 (47), p.218-220

⁶ Danish Modernism in architecture was spurred by the influence from Central European Modernism in the 1920s. For the sake of this chapter specific issues relating to the Århusian situation have been selected to illustrate the access to contemporary housing design for local residents and those involved in housing provision locally.

⁷ Hegner Christiansen, *Arkitektens Ugehæfte*, 1939, p.70

⁸ Hegner Christiansen *ibid*.

⁹ Axel Skov, Udstillingens pædagogiske side, *Arkitektens Maanedshæfte*, 1939, 41, p.124-132

¹⁰ *Arkitektens Maanedshæfte*, 1939, xli, p.121-132

¹¹ J. Sevaldsen, Trade fairs and Cultural Promotion c. 1930-1970: Visualising Anglo-Danish Relations, in J. Sevaldsen (ed.), *Britain and Denmark. Political, Economic and Cultural Relations in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Cph.: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2003

¹² N.-O. Lund, Housing in Scandinavia, 1945-1985. Architectural Ideologies and Physical Organisation, *Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research*, 1988, (5), p.67-72

¹³ Review by Poul Erik Skriver, *Arkitektens Ugehæfte*, 1946, xviii, p.202-204

¹⁴ *Arkitektens Ugehæfte*, 1946, xlviii, p.193

....den engelske Byplanudstilling har endnu et Budskab, som mere retter sig til Fagfolkene. Den er i sig selv et Udtryk for ønsket om at komme paa Talefod med "the man in the street", vække hans Interesse for det Bysamfund han tilhører, kalde paa hans Forstaaelse og Medansvar. I England har man i en fantastisk Grad evnet at skabe en saadan folkelig Interesse og offentlig Opinion i disse vigtige Spørgsmaal. Gennem Bøger, Brochurer, Radioforedrag, Vandreudstillinger o.s.v. har man midt under Krigen rejst Følelsen af et levende Medansvar blandt Befolkningen for den kommende byplanmæssige Udvikling. Det er medvirkende til at skabe en politisk Basis for de vidtgaaende Planer, der føres frem.

- ¹⁵ The city's Mayor, Unmack Larsen, thought it a 'beautiful and dignified exhibition'. The display was designed by the City Architect's Department. Århus Byrådsforhandling, 23.02.1949
- ¹⁶ The cities involved were Bergen, Göteborg, Åbo and Århus
- ¹⁷ Designed in 1936-37 by Arne Jacobsen and Erik Møller.
- ¹⁸ Henrik Fode (ed.), *Byens hus*, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1991, p.50
- ¹⁹ A similar message to the concerns of the national Social Democratic party in its Keynesian inspired manifesto, *Fremtidens Danmark* (Denmark of the Future), Cph.: Social Demokratiet, 1946
- ²⁰ A series of photographs exist of this exhibition, held at the Århus Town Hall, City Architect Dept. (n.d. – c.1947-49)
- ²¹ The list quotes: 'c. 1860 – a large city in the making'; 'c.1900 – Århus becomes cultural centre'; 'c.1935 – Århus becomes the seat of the sciences'; 'Århus is the administrative centre'
- ²² *Demokraten*, 31.12.53
- ²³ This was probably a disingenuous claim as Larsen was involved at a high level with the city's expansion and kept files on the re-housing of the poorest tenants living in the temporary barracks available across the city. See for example the Unmack Larsen collections, Erhvervsarkivet: Unmack Larsens arkiv.
- ²⁴ Unmack Larsen in *Demokraten*, 31.12.53:
- Ja , vi begynder og ender altid med boligspørgsmaalet, fordi det er rædselsfuldt, hvad vi stadig vader rundt i af skidt paa dette område ogsaa i vor by, som har set saa nydelig og pæn ud ved juletid....og som ogsaa rummer saa megen daarligdom, som vi dog vel alle helst vil være foruden. Men her kan ingen skyde ansvaret fra sig, heller ikke De, selv om De stadig siger, at De jo har betalt Deres skatter. - Dette har,.....erhvervslivet i vor by ogsaa indset, naar det hidtil har betalt tusinder af kroner til det social-filantropiske byggeri - udover skatterne!
- ²⁵ See the introduction by Unmack Larsen and Rudolf Jensen in the catalogue, *Boliger Nu*, Århus, 1953, p.3-4
- ²⁶ Vesterbo Boligaktion; A. Gaardmand, *Dansk Byplanlægning, 1938-1992*, Cph.: Arkitektens Forlag, 1993, p.63-66
- ²⁷ These were some of the many themes running through the display, see the selection of images in Ole Thomassen (ed.), *Krise i boligspørgsmålet*, Conference proceedings, Cph.: Det Danske Forlag, 1954, and photographs kept at Århus Town Hall, City Architect's Dept.
- ²⁸ Urban decline and de-industrialisation is one reason given for the need to market a city in the post-industrial age – Newcastle was experiencing a level of decline that Århus did not during the 1950s. See for example: S.V. Ward and J.R.Gold, (eds.), op. cit.; S.V. Ward, op. cit.; Mark Goodwin, *The City as Commodity*, in Kearns and Philo (eds.), op. cit., p.147
- ²⁹ Århus Kommunes Arkiv, Århus Byråd J.Nr. 1284-1947, programme, *Byplanmødet i Århus 1948*
- ³⁰ A. Mogensen, *Århus kommunes bolignødsbyggeri*, Arkitektens Ugehæfte, 1948, 50, p.81-82. An article on Finnish wooden single-family houses for sale built by Århus Council as a temporary crisis solution.
- ³¹ Arkitektens Ugehæfte, 1948, 50, p.125-128
- ³² AAB Scrapbook, vol.2, *Århus Stiftstidende* 07.02.52
- ³³ Hans-Erik Langkilde (ed.), *Bedre boliger*, Cph.: Det Danske Forlag, 1952
- ³⁴ *Århus Stiftstidende* 07.02.52
- ³⁵ NCCM 17.03.59
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ A memory of the homes of the elderly a councillor had seen in Denmark was evoked at a Council meeting once discussions of a home for the elderly was underway, in a defence for a certain qualitative approach to housing elderly. Mrs Wynne-Jones, NCCM 01.03.1961
- ³⁸ J. Møller and O. Lind (1994), op. cit., 94
- ³⁹ Det almennyttige byggeri styrket – gennem fælles indsats, *Boligen*, 1969, p.331
- ⁴⁰ *Boligen* came out in fairly small issues of around 4-5,000 copies in 1968-69.
- ⁴¹ Certainly the Federation of Co-operatives in Denmark noticed the high public profile of homeownership in the media: 'Der er jo gået pop i villabyggeriet' ['Single family housing has become a 'pop' issue'. transl.]. AOF/Det Kooperative Fællesforbund, *Boligen*, Copenhagen: 1966, p.97

⁴² Det almennyttige byggeri styrket – gennem fælles indsats, *Boligen*, 1969, p.331

⁴³ See a selection of *Beboerbladet Boligen* – for example 1969, p.6-8 on Gellerup-planen; 1970, p.2-3 on living in halls of residents.

⁴⁴ J. Møller and O. Lind (1994) op. cit., p.154

⁴⁵ Bent Hansen, Familien i centrum, *Beboerbladet Boligen*, 1964, p.3-6

⁴⁶ Verner Jørgensen, 'Boligforeningsbyggeriet bestormes', *Beboerbladet Boligen*, 1964, p.2

⁴⁷ Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening (AAB), (anniversary booklet) 1919-1929, Århus: AAB, 1929; Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening, *Vi bygger selv*, Århus: AAB, 1944; Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening, 1919-1969, Århus: AAB, 1969; Boligforeningen Ringgården, *Ringgården – en almennyttig boligforening 1938-50-1988*, Århus: Ringgården, 1988; Lars Meldgaard, *En boligforening - og dens mennesker*, Århus: Aabyhøj Boligforening, 1992

⁴⁸ AAB, *Vi Bygger selv*, Århus: AAB, 1944, n.p.

⁴⁹ AAB (1969), op. cit., p.26-29

⁵⁰ Nu er forbrugerkampagnen startet, *Boligen*, 1966, p.515; AOF and the Kooperative Fællesforbund, *Boligen*, Copenhagen:1966

⁵¹ *Demokraten*, 10.09.50

⁵² Educational pamphlets such as Birthe Andrup's *Boligen - Vejledning til Studiekredsarbejde*, Gyldensdalske Boghandel, 1946 were to be used in study circles encouraged in AOF education programmes. The booklet contained references to government publications and the housing philosophies of social housing associations as well as a lesson on the decoration of the home. It constructed study sessions around a series of questions posed in the spirit of Danish public enlightenment traditions that were subject to the hegemony of Grundtvigian culture.

⁵³ Lars Meldgaard, *En boligforening - og dens mennesker*, Århus: Aabyhøj Boligforening, 1992, p.33-38

⁵⁴ On setting up the training centre Haraldskær see O. Lind and J. Møller, (1994), op. cit. p.178-180, *Beboerbladet Boligen*, 1970, p.22-23

⁵⁵ Det almennyttige byggeri styrket – gennem fælles indsats, *Boligen*, 1969, p.329-331 listed a series of training activities taking place nationwide, which included courses for new committee members and representatives, and courses for concierges and technicians.

⁵⁶ Århusian Statistiske Kontor, *Økonomiske og Statistiske Meddelelse, Århusian Kommune, 1961, 1971*

⁵⁷ Rustet til kamp om boligmarkedet, *Boligen*, 1966, p.327; Det almennyttige byggeri styrket – gennem fælles indsats, *Boligen*, 1969, p.326

⁵⁸ Boligudstillinger ruller over hele landet, *Boligen*, 1968, p.30 – The language used by the NFDHS involved self-promoting rhetoric suggesting collectively the housing movement was a future orientated, competitive business:

Vort slogan [Det er godt at bo godt] er ved at være godt slået fast i offentligheden, og boligbevægelsen er ikke mindst gennem det store udstillingarbejde, ofte med sideløbende udstillinger..... ved helt klart og tydeligt at placere sig som den ikke blot største bygherregruppe, men også den gruppe, der satser på forøget boligkvalitet og forøget boligoplysning.

Transl.: Our slogan [It is good to dwell well] is becoming well anchored with the public, and the housing movement is marking itself as the largest house builder, but also as the group that provides improved housing quality and improved housing information/education, not least due to the great exhibition work, often in conjunction with additional exhibitions....

⁵⁹ Leif Nielsen, Boligudstilling – forbrugeroplysning med succes, *Boligen*, 1967, p.48-49

⁶⁰ De forstår at lave boligudstilling, *Boligen*, 1964, p.417

⁶¹ E. Nygaard (1984), p.135-136. Sydjyllandplanen, *Boligen*, 1962, p.25-34; *Boligen*, 1964, ibid.; Carl H. Beckman, Sydjyllandplanen. 1800 boliger med indbygget fremtid, *Beboerbladet Boligen*, 1965, p.27-33;

⁶² It has continued to signify the 'brand' of social housing built under the influence of the Danish housing association. One might even speculate that the red also signified an implicit reference to a social democratic orientation, although this would probably have been denied at the time.

⁶³ The intention behind the logo and poster campaign was the identification with the social housing idea. Det almennyttige byggeri styrket – gennem fælles indsats, *Boligen*, 1969, p.325-326

⁶⁴ *Boligen*, 1969, *ibid.*

⁶⁵ Leif Nielsen, *Boligen*, 1967, *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Four social housing associations based in the suburban councils of Århus, Aabyhøj Boligforening, Boligforeningen Solgården, Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening, Viby J. and Byggeselskabet Århus Omegn had collaborated to rationalise their newest system built projects modelled according to the Sydjylland Plan. Erhversarkivet: Catalogue, *Boligforeningernes etagetypehuse*, Århus: n.d.

⁶⁷ Boligudstillinger ruller over hele landet, *Boligen*, 1968, p.31

⁶⁸ In its report on the opening *Beboerbladet Boligen* published an estimated rent expense for a future resident living in the new housing system. With the provision of a private rent subsidy a family could, it claimed, happily live in these much larger flats without excessive rent increases. An interview with a resident family was used persuasively to evoke recognition and identification with the benefits of moving from old, cramped inner city housing in Århus to this much more spacious housing on the urban edge. The representative household consisted of a carpenter, his wife and daughter. They proudly claimed they were not seriously worse off economically in their new home than when they had lived in their inner city dwelling, and in addition benefited from more space and a communal laundry. Udstilling med alle tiders tilstrømning, *Beboerbladet Boligen*, 1968, p.44-45

⁶⁹ By the early 1970s it became almost legitimate to speak of 'advertising' social housing – not only the housing but the 'specific idea' of social housing. Notions of community, non-profit making and *boligdemokrati* for some became the key to the identity of social housing associations' near 'brand' style self-perception. Former Minister of Housing, Kaj Andersen, *Moderne markedføring af Boliger*, *Boligen*, 1972, p.416-427

⁷⁰ Helen Meller, Urban renewal and citizenship: the quality of life in British cities, 1890-1990, *Urban History*, May 1995, 22, pt. 1, p.74-89

⁷¹ N. Tiratsoo, The Construction of Blitzed British Cities 1945-55: Myths and Reality, *Contemporary British History*, 2000, 14, (1), p.39-41; N. Tiratsoo, "New Vistas", the Labour Party, citizenship and the built environment in the 1940s, in A. Beach and R. Weight (eds.), *The Right to Belong. Citizenship and national identity in Britain 1930-1960*, London: J.B. Tarvis, 1998

⁷² Elizabeth Halton, *Our Towns*, London: Association for education in Citizenship, The English University Press Ltd., n.d., *Unless we plan now. Handbook for discussion groups*, London: Association for education in Citizenship, The English University Press Ltd., n.d. cites other text in this series incl. *The Democratic Idea* and *Is Britain a Democracy?*

⁷³ F. Williams, *The Democratic Idea*, London: Association for education in Citizenship, The English University Press Ltd., n.d., p.16

⁷⁴ E. Halton, *op. cit.*, p.11

⁷⁵ *Evening Chronicle*, 15.10.45

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ NCCM 19.12.45

⁷⁸ Hubbard, Faire and Lilley, *op. cit.*, p.383-385

⁷⁹ A. Ravetz (2003), *op. cit.* p. 120-122.

⁸⁰ MD/NC/129/6, 22.05.47, Laing Art Gallery Committee Minutes.

For the history of the Council of Industrial Design's work to exhibit and promote a good design culture J. Woodham and P. Maguire (eds.), *Design and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1997

⁸¹ P. Sparke, *As long as it's Pink. The Sexual Politics of Taste*, London: Harper Collins, 1995

⁸² P. Sparke (ed.), *Did Britain Make it?: British Design in Context 1946-1986*, London: Design Council, 1986

⁸³ *Evening Chronicle* 23.01.47

⁸⁴ J. Guldberg, *Tradition, modernitet og samtidighed. Om Børge Mogensens FDB-møbler og det modernes hjemliggørelse*, Working paper, Odense: University of Odense, 1998

⁸⁵ Laing Art Gallery, *An Exhibition of Danish Domestic Design*, Newcastle: Laing Art Gallery, n.d.

⁸⁶ *The Journal*, 27.07.51

⁸⁷ The definition of 'conservative modernity' evokes such modernisation strategies: the sense that the new was filtered through a popular idiom that was often if not exactly backward looking, then domesticated, privatised and often feminised in its expression. Although conventionally located in the interwar years, the promotion of a feminised domestic interior in the new towns of the 1950s would also have reflected conservative modernity. See Penny Sparke (1995), op. cit., p. 141-142, 159-160 and chapter 8 *passim*.

⁸⁸ *The Northern Architect*, Vol.1, Nov.1961-Nov. 1962

⁸⁹ *Newcastle Journal and Northern Mail*, 14.05.58

⁹⁰ The visitor figures were 3,000 in Carlisle, 2,300 in Darlington, 2,372 in Middlesbrough and 7,413 in Sunderland (3.9% of the city's total population). For a summary description of the RIBA centenary events see Northern Architectural Association, *Annual Report*, 1958-1959, p.34-37

⁹¹ Citation of Lord Strang's (Chairman of the National Parks Commission) opening speech, *Newcastle Journal and Northern Mail*, 14.05.58

⁹² S. Wilkinson, Towards a New city? A case study of image-improvement initiatives in Newcastle upon Tyne, in P. Healey et al, *Rebuilding Cities. Property-led urban regeneration*, London: E&FN Spon, 1992, p.178

⁹³ J. Elliot, T. Dan Smith in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, *Local Government Studies*, 1975, April, p.33-43.

⁹⁴ Natasha Vall, The Regional Apparel: Urban Aggrandisement and Regionalist Aspirations in Malmö and Newcastle 1960-1995, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 2001, (26), 4, p.318

⁹⁵ Vall *ibid*.

⁹⁶ N. Vall, The Emergence of the Post-Industrial Economy in Newcastle 1914-2000, in B. Lancaster, and R. Colls, *Newcastle upon Tyne. A Modern History*, Chichester, Phillimore & Co Ltd., 2001, p. 64-67; Fred Robinson, Industrial Structure, in Fred Robinson, *Post-Industrial Tyneside*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle upon Tyne City and Libraries and Arts, 1988, p.17-18

⁹⁷ *Civic News*, March 1963, Proctor and Gamble advertisement reprinted from *The Guardian* newspaper.

⁹⁸ Some events such as the display of the North East in the shoe store Simpson's in Piccadilly turned out to present very little of Newcastle; *Evening Chronicle*, 24.03.66 PR Sub-Committee

⁹⁹ *Demokraten* special supplement on British Week in Århus, 24.09.1964, also NCCM, 01.07.64, p.176-178. See the list of events claimed to have been part of the Town Planning Committee's publicity campaign, Town Planning Committee (1967). K.W.R. Baxter, *Report to the PR Committee*, Newcastle, 1966.

¹⁰⁰ *Official City Guide* (Newcastle Corporation), 1964, 1969

¹⁰¹ Alderman Butterfield, NCCM, 01.04.64

¹⁰² T Dan Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography*, Newcastle: Oriel Press Ltd., 1970

¹⁰³ NCCM, 20.01.60

¹⁰⁴ S. Ward and Gold (eds.) (1994), p.61-66, and S. Ward (1998), ch.8 *passim* on the notion of place promotion in Britain.

¹⁰⁵ NCCM, 20.01.60, Mr Cowan

¹⁰⁶ The report of the Parliamentary and General Purposes Committee had studied the public relations strategies of cities such as Nottingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Coventry, Bristol and Leicester, and found a variety of approaches from fully established PR Departments to a single Publicity Officer, or no publicity systems in place whatsoever. It also cited the *Advertisers' Weekly* on recent requests for support in promoting industrial development in Northumberland. It seemed to echo similar changes taking place in the United States, where major demographic upheavals had taken place, 'People, enterprise, capital, vitality and sophistication were being deployed across the whole land.' It would seem this was an earlier reference to US strategies, than the post-industrial methods discussed by S. Ward (1998). NCCM 21.12.60, p.654

¹⁰⁷ *The Journal*, 12.04.61

¹⁰⁸ *Evening Chronicle*, 14.04.61

- ¹⁰⁹ *Evening Chronicle*, 14.04.61, also a point made by Tom Faulkner in Architecture in Newcastle, in William Lancaster and R. Colls, *Newcastle upon Tyne. A Modern History*, Chichester, Phillimore & Co Ltd., 2001
- ¹¹⁰ NCCM, 03.01.62, Report by J.K.T. Public Relations
- ¹¹¹ Graham King, Director of Housing, *General Report of Housing Management*, Newcastle: Housing Management Committee, 1961, p.45
- ¹¹² *The Journal*, 02.05.62
- ¹¹³ NCCM, 04.12.63, p.726
- ¹¹⁴ NCCM, 04.12.63, p.731
- ¹¹⁵ NCCM, 03.02.65
- ¹¹⁶ *Evening Chronicle*, 09.09.66
- ¹¹⁷ The leaflet provided information on the conditions for improvement grants, hoping this would lead to the construction of bath or shower facilities, hot water, sanitary instalments and the availability of gas for cooking and heating. Newcastle Housing Committee, *New Homes for Old in a way that you can afford!*, Newcastle, n.d.
- ¹¹⁸ *Evening Chronicle*, 17.04.61
- ¹¹⁹ Almost two-thirds of whom alone came to the Barclays Bank exhibition. MD/NC/107/12, 27.03.61; 12.04.61; 19.04.61; 25.04.61, Housing Committee
- ¹²⁰ *Evening Chronicle*, 03.05.62
- ¹²¹ Lotte Jensen, *Challenges to Citizenship*, Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research, 1995, 12, p.183-185
- ¹²² Nick Tiratsoo, "New Vistas", the Labour Party, citizenship and the built environment in the 1940s, in A. Beach and R. Weight (eds.), *The Right to Belong. Citizenship and national identity in Britain 1930-1960*, London: J.B. Tarvis, 1998
- ¹²³ S. Wilkinson, op. cit., p.178
- ¹²⁴ In 1966 the Turistforeningen for Århus og Omegn (Greater Århus region Tourist Society) was subsidised by the Council and had 2 members on its Committee. It was (and still is) based in the town hall, where it promoted local sights e.g. the town hall, the open air museum, Den Gamle By, promoted local hotels and organised tours of the city for journalists and visitors. See the file *Borgmestersager 1941-1971*, Turistforeningen for Århus og Omegn; Århus Kommunes Arkiv, Journalsag 1-1965, all at Erhvervsarkivet.
- ¹²⁵ Århus Kommunes Arkiv, Journalsag 45-1961 and 601-1985
- ¹²⁶ Newcastle Labour Party, *Peril in the City* (Local Election pamphlet), Newcastle: Labour Party, 1955
- ¹²⁷ Klaus Petersen, *Legitimität und Krise. Die Geschichte des Dänischen Wohlfahrtsstaates 1945-1973*, Berlin: Verlag Arno Spitz, 1998, p.159-162
- ¹²⁸ Frederiksgade-kommissionen, *Ny hovedgade i Århus*, Århus, 1953; J.T. Lauridsen, Byens rum in I. Gejl (ed.) *Århus, byens historie* Vol. 4, Århus: Århus Byhistorisk Udvalg, 1995, p.29-32
- ¹²⁹ S. Ward (1998), op. cit. p.191. Ward describes this as an explicit strategy for post-industrial cities such as Glasgow during the 1980s, but urban self-promotion to attract industrial development clearly took place much earlier. See his discussion ch.8 *passim*.
- ¹³⁰ Interview with group of elderly housing association residents, Solbakken housing area, Århus, July 2001
- ¹³¹ Interview with Mrs. MS, January 2000

Chapter 5

Managing the ‘social’ in social housing - Managing ‘housing’ in social housing, the late 1960s - 1970s

Introduction

The previous chapters have considered a period, which, it could be argued, represented a consensus notion about the provision of social housing as a welfare service. Until the 1960s there seems to have been a tacit acceptance by Newcastle’s tenants that the management strategies in social housing on the whole was the arena for local government to uphold. If tenants contemplated protest they related to localised issues that encompassed small sections of households, the actual process through which their cases were dealt were rarely if ever challenged – supportive clientilism (an administrative approach, which created bureaucratic distance between accountable professional groups and the people they perceived to be serving) seemed the acceptable means of managing housing welfare. This changed in the later 1960s and was to continue to sharpen in the 1970s.

This chapter will examine a period when the previous consensus was challenged. The notion of supportive clientilism appeared to be problematic to new social groups who expected a different type of freedom and decision making process in their lives. One observer of the 1960s has commented that the ‘cultural revolution’ of that decade took place as a complex, inter-related dynamic process between counter cultural youth movements and politically engaged groups such as the New Left in Britain, and those groups in power who deployed ‘measured judgement’ in responding to, but also facilitating the presence of protest and change.¹ Others have seen the influx of radicalised students in cities affect other movements such as the working class, as they created a space for making demands for social change and improvement – in the area of housing demands and expectations were certainly made manifest as a part of this wider radicalisation of everyday life.² The present chapter will consider the localised expressions of contention that were felt both in Århus and Newcastle in the wake of the waves of change experienced in the 1960s.


In both cities the problem of local participant democracy and community (in Danish *nærdemokrati* (local democracy), *beboerdemokrati* (residents’ democracy),

medbestemmelse (joint decision making), *beboersammenhold* (residents' community)³ was explicitly engaging specific groups of local residents and tenants, while political bodies and organisations were working out ways in which democratic processes could be modified to adapt to contemporary social changes. Local authorities and activist groups in both Århus and Newcastle responded to local specificities in terms of structural conditions, political realities, their relationship to power (as perceived by the particular groups), and ideological positions.

Turning towards an emphasis on the 'social' in the sphere of housing gives this chapter a broader focus than previous chapters, which have focused solely on publicly funded housing. Here the 'social' is used to widen the scope of the chapter to consider the challenge to the question of the legitimacy of urban and national governance of the population's housing welfare. Activists in both Århus and Newcastle used the local setting as a starting point in their much greater critique of what some on the far left called the 'formynderisk velfærdstat' (the patronising welfare state). The tropes deployed were those of inclusion of the public into decision making that affected their everyday lives, the problem related to the issue of direct or representative democratic governance in the urban locale. The chapter will look at activities and tactics of residents' and tenants' societies, and in the Århusian case, the developments of a statutory residents' democratic system (*beboerdemokrati*), which facilitated the opportunity for widening the scope of residents' influence in their local social housing areas.


Århus: Problems of social housing – distance and scale

Despite the historical legacy of co-operative principles in Danish housing associations, the post-war period saw a noticeable gap growing between the administration of the associations and their members and residents. In Århus the relationship between members of the Social Democratic Party and some housing associations continued to be strong throughout the twentieth century. The closeness of established political structures and civic administration to the social housing cause led to the institutionalisation of administrative conventions and forums for dialogue as housing associations grew. It is probably true to say that the original sense of participatory influence diminished to the degree that national housing policy subjected associations to streamlined regulation.⁴ Indeed regulations of social housing associations commonly followed a set of standard




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
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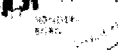
ADMINISTRATIV
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FORDI NÆSTE BYGGESAG HVIS DEN KOMMER ER HELT ANDERLEDES




BOLIGMINISTERIETS BYGGEPROGRAM FOR MONTAGEBYGGERI:

VEJEN TIL ET FÆLLES PRODUKTIONSPROGRAM



ET FÆLLES PRODUKTIONSPROGRAM KRÆVER

EN FÆLLES INDSATS AF BOLIGFØRENINGER



BYGGERI

SÅDAN ER FORHOLDENE - FORDI DER MANGLER:

KONTINUITET I BYGGERIET

KONTINUITET KRÆVER ET PRODUKTIONSPROGRAM -

DETTE ER STILLET DE BYGGENDE TIL RÅDHED GENNEM:

BOLIGMINISTERIETS BYGGEPROGRAM FOR MONTAGEBYGGERI

BYGGERI

SÅDAN ER FORHOLDENE - FORDI DER MANGLER:

KONTINUITET I BYGGERIET

KONTINUITET KRÆVER ET PRODUKTIONSPROGRAM -

DETTE ER STILLET DE BYGGENDE TIL RÅDHED GENNEM:

BOLIGMINISTERIETS BYGGEPROGRAM FOR MONTAGEBYGGERI

However, in order to cope with the recommendations of the Ministry of Housing local housing associations found themselves compelled to join forces to enable the economies of scale that was required of Fordist construction methods. Hence consortia were established that developed innovative housing forms as discussed in the previous chapter. System built housing areas sprang up across the Greater Århus area during the 1960s and 1970s, including Rosengården, Bispeparken, Vestervang, Klostervang and on Langenæs.

It is difficult to gauge how deeply involved residents were in local decision making during the 1960s, but those who were saw decision making within housing associations becoming increasingly removed from the membership. Resident approval of expansion plans were likely to be rubberstamping exercises of projects that had been projected by the central Committee and its architects and authorised by the local authority (Fig. 5.2).



Fig. 5.2 The plan of the large system built housing area, Gellerupplanen is revealed at the representatives' meeting of the housing association, Brabrand Boligforening, when it would be authorised. In the foreground members of the Committee and local parish council, April 1966. Brabrand Boligforening's archive.

It is now common to criticise Fordist housing projects as taking little account of people's everyday needs for social connection, and a large literature has grown up around the history of modernist aspirations for utopian concrete housing projects and its legacy of creating 'problem estates.'⁶ A study of a local consortium of housing associations established in Århus that was active in the 1960s illustrates the process of initiating housing projects that disengaged residents from the project planning process. At the end of the 1950s the largest Århusian housing association, AAB, together with the Council invited selected housing associations to meet to establish a joint slum clearance company, Contact.⁷ Five associations became members in 1961 (Annex, Vesterbo, Ringgaarden,

Statsbo, Det Sociale Boligbyggeri), each with a representative on the Committee, while the Mayor of Århus represented the local authority. All member associations provided economic support for its activities. Its aims were to work towards the rationalisation, co-ordination and planning of housing construction, building housing to replace slum clearance with the possibility of building single-family houses for sale.⁸ It continued to reinforce the message of co-operation: Contact was presented by the Mayor as an alternative to private speculative development of the inner city.⁹ The consortium reflected the wish at this time to co-ordinate large-scale housing provision, both from within the Ministry of Housing and the Federation of Danish Housing Associations.¹⁰

The company nevertheless did not become an independent housing association with the provisions for accountability that this would have required, and it undertook projects carved out for it by the Council. Thus for example it cleared and replaced housing in the Nygade quarter (a small inner city area with the city's worst slums) and modernised a small Council-built housing scheme from the 1920s. Independently of Contact moreover, the five member associations built a large system built housing area, Frydenlund, dividing the area up between them but using a coherent design format.¹¹

By the early 1970s, in the wake of national policies on resident democracy in housing associations, Contact proposed its own project, and requested permission to convert to become a housing association.¹² However the Ministry of Housing rejected the request, suggesting instead that Contact take on business management responsibilities for individual housing association projects.¹³ Later steps were nevertheless taken to introduce tenant representatives to the organisation's committee when it became a self-governing housing company in 1982. It would appear though, that the consortium had little significant effect on the urban landscape of Århus after the initial push in the 1960s, and instead adopted a housing management role. By the late 1970s social housing construction in the city had been reduced radically, while the centralised organisation of bodies such as Contact no longer held the legitimacy they had done during the optimistic, modernising 1960s. Such consortia reflected the changes in focus of decision-making processes that were to be central to the housing association government. What really challenged these centralising efforts was to appear when the cultural mood turned towards

a 'recovery' of the democratic project within Danish social housing associations, the residents' democracy (*beboerdemokratiet*).

Reviving the democratic nature of social housing – *beboerdemokrati*

From the early 1960s it was becoming clear that not all was well with the democratic sensibilities of Danish housing associations.¹⁴ Anecdotal evidence showed that only around 10 % of residents attended annual general meetings despite changes in the level of access by residents to representation gained through the 1958 Housing Act. By 1970 the Federation of Danish Housing Associations therefore re-positioned *beboerdemokrati* as a central policy in the administration of housing associations. This was not a concept newly invented by housing associations. From their inception non-profit housing associations had had democratic processes in place for their households (see chapter 2). But as some housing associations became larger, and their relationship with local authorities at times took on corporatist forms, the influence of resident members had diminished - at the same time making it difficult to encourage active involvement.¹⁵ The administrative bureaucracy of larger housing associations had grown, and some took on large building projects whose physical environment formed the spatially alienating equivalent to the loss of 'togetherness' and community (*fællesskab*) that seemed to have belonged to a not too distant past (see chapter 6).¹⁶

Århusian housing associations subsequently implemented the revived democratic system - aiming to increase the level of participation by residents.¹⁷ It has been shown that those housing associations whose principles rested on the co-operative system (*andelsboligforeninger*) already followed some sort of representative democratic system. The Housing Act of 1958 had previously allowed for the establishment of residents' representatives in the two other types of housing associations, the shareholding and the self-governing types. But even if residents' were given the renewed opportunity for representation, they did not necessarily have effective decision making powers as the example of Contact shows. In some cases it would appear that residents were reluctant to actively support this process in any case. Despite having started its life as a highly conscious effort to represent social justice in its housing provision the housing association Vesterbo discovered that this did not equate to a similar equal measure of interest by its members in participating in its activities: Vesterbo for example used its residents'

magazine to repeatedly encourage members to take an active part in the committee elections of the association signalling a dearth in resident involvement as shown in chapter 3. The NFDHA was also becoming alert to the lack of tenant involvement during the 1960s

Beboerdemokrati became the NFDHA policy that might solve the participation problem. It could be seen as a decentralising means to bring influence in the housing system closer to the residents.¹⁸ At the local level, residents within a section (ranging from a single block of flats to a complete housing area containing several blocks) voted for a body of representatives. Local representative committees would oversee the day-to-day running of the section, maintain a local budget and dealt with the social affairs of the locale. It responded to disputes amongst neighbours and was appointed to manage the housing infrastructure and facilities.¹⁹ The reconstitution of the ideal active resident-citizen as a central agent in the participatory housing system required an increased level of focused training and knowledge on housing matters that would complement the conferences, magazines and adult education facilities that housing associations had hitherto relied on (described in the previous chapter).

Thus the active resident representatives of a housing association were sent to the national centre for the training of staff and voluntary residents' representatives that opened by the leadership of the housing movement in 1971.²⁰ The centre provided essential knowledge on housing management processes: courses on housing policy, housing administration and maintaining a housing association budget. Training and education had historically been central planks of the co-operative movement's culture. The organisation of learning was in a sense a continuation of the Danish notion of 'popular enlightenment' (*folkeoplysning*), which was integrally connected to the national constitution as a democracy (*folkestyre*), and was embedded in a notion of a Danish sense of identity – an identity that lay as an under-current in much of the housing movement's practices.²¹ Yet there were signs that the democratic principles reflected ideal practices rather than actual activity as the increased social polarity within social housing in Denmark seemingly excluded some residents from engaging in the system.²²

The problems of participation in social housing management in Århus

With the principle of *beboerdemokrati* in place the opportunity was made available for residents to affect the provisions of local amenities and improve the management of their housing areas. The principle was widely debated and accessible handbooks outlining rules and policy clarified the roles of members in relation to housing committee structures and decision making.²³ Yet, despite a keen debate in the press on the meaning of local democracy, and the outspoken nature of more radical housing activists involving themselves in Århus city centre (described below) there were signs that residents in local social housing areas only reluctantly engaged themselves in housing matters.

The Danish citizenship debates of the 1990s have explored the lethargy of participation in social housing associations as an effect of alienation felt by residents who were excluded from the political culture of the Danish participatory system.²⁴ But as early as the 1970s, there were signs that the democratic project in local housing associations was suffering from a degree of apathy amongst residents. Housing association residents were complaining of decisions being imposed from above, despite the possibility of '*medindflydelse*' (a word keenly used during the 1970s to indicate levels of public influence, and was often used in connection with thoughts on *nærdemokrati* (local participant democracy)). One Århusian critic commented on the soul destroying practices of Committees of housing associations who chose to build banks instead of kindergartens, aesthetic parks instead of play grounds, and prepared absolute, pedantic house rules on the washing of stairs and the parking of prams, creating a so-called barrack-mentality that stood in strong contrast to the demands for freedoms fought for in the West.²⁵ This comment arose from the notion that residents were powerless when faced with ruling Committees, however well-intentioned a national participatory system had been. It seemed that the foundation of social housing and welfare were insufficient in satisfying a new demand for freely chosen self-rule.

For idealists within the housing movement new system built estates had seemed like an opportune area in which to nurture resident participation in different forms (see chapter 6). However even when the newness of the area might inspire engagement, and residents had the opportunity to direct local developments in a certain way, might set in. The problem was addressed through investigations of specific housing areas: what were the

reasons for the low turnover at section meetings for example - and how did local residents make sense of the local democratic process in their housing association? One research project in a newly built social housing complex on the outskirts of Århus did find a degree of reluctance by residents to participate in local decision making processes. The section committee at Tovesøj hoped the investigation would encourage increased resident involvement.²⁶ At section meetings approx. 43 % of residents attended. The social mix of the estate comprised of a broad range of working class and service sector workers, and one fifth were students, of a total of 624 households. The suggested a paradox: those residents who actually went to meetings felt they had less influence on their local housing decisions than those who had stayed at home, despite some claims to having an interest in becoming involved.²⁷ The report concluded by raising the question on how to encourage an active sense of participation from residents, particularly since there was almost full support for a local residents' meeting house and an awareness of the need for further facilities for young people in the area. Decisions on facilities could be made by the Section Committee, which would support the aim to reduce excessive top-level decision-making.

Some members of the housing movement leadership may have made certain assumptions about what democracy meant within the housing association body as a whole. It may have been taken for granted that a simple and homogenous form of representative democracy was an adequate foundation for growth of participation in local social housing areas. Coupled with an assumption that housing association residents would almost naturally adopt the responsibilities of decision making and become informed through engagement, there was rarely any actual evidence that residents as a whole absorbed the democratic message. As residents' democracy matured it became clear that the perceptions of different agents within the Danish social housing system towards democratic values varied. Micro studies have revealed that democratic participation depended on the sense of commitment and insight into the traditions and values of a Danish model of decentralised democracy within housing associations. By the 1970s there were signs that the resident base of certain newer social housing areas had fewer social opportunities than previous generations of housing association residents. The schism between social renting and homeownership was felt not only in the perceived freedom private housing gave to an

owner, but in the explicit nature of the politicisation of residents as they became part of the social housing membership.

Dissenting voices and radical housing activities: Meditations on local democracy (*nærdemokrati*) and participation in the urban quarters of Århus

As Århus was undergoing spatial changes with growth in industry and suburbanisation, privately rented housing in the older quarters became the nodal point for opposition to the conventional ideas of welfare housing. The politicisation of tenure was a central tenet pervading the culture of renting in private housing, which spilled into and overlapped with the formalised political management of social housing associations. Notions of community, participation, the nurturing environment and decentralised democracy were employed and reiterated to shape alternative narratives of housing activity to conventional perceptions of urban planning and housing policy by housing activists in the city.

After the local authority re-organisation in 1970 the city of Århus merged with its surrounding parish councils, as the municipality had desired since the early 1960s. In total the rationalisation meant that a single local authority centred in Århus arose from a merger of 21 parish councils.²⁸ In terms of administration Danish local authorities were given significant powers of autonomy. The re-organisation preceded a national debate on local democracy (*nærdemokratiet*), which became a strongly contested notion during the 1970s. Notions of democracy pervaded local debates and in Århus this was particularly relevant in the context of urban changes and housing that were taking place: the removal of traditional working class families from the city centre to suburban homeownership, and the expansion of large system built housing estates in the suburbs built by social housing associations. At the same time student numbers had been increasing with the rise of higher education institutions in the city since the 1960s. Members of this group expressed a significant, radical social critique within the political decision making processes.

The organisation of *beboerdemokrati* for those in social housing was constitutionally founded and implemented to persuade residents of their right to a voice in local housing matters. It contrasted with the conditions given private tenants in the old housing stock.

This was at least perception of the residents' movement (*beboerbevægelsen*). The residents' movement engaged vocally in contestations around decisions on national housing policy, expressing itself through activism and local community building. It could be interpreted as a social movement that arose from a desire to alter the constitution of society in significant ways, albeit that its primary objectives were to improve the immediate environment of the older housing areas, and to challenge an increasingly liberalised national housing policy. The residents' movement pursued a mission to question the national welfare state as a bourgeois invention, and social housing in this case symbolised a pillar of the Danish welfare state.

The challenge was made explicit in publications seeking to politicise residents and tenants. A critic from within the Århusian residents' movement made it clear that *beboerdemokrati* within social housing had never been actual resident decision making (*beboermedbestemmelse*).²⁹ In fact, he suggested, residents in social housing were instead the object of the housing associations' interests, rather than a space to represent themselves in relationships of equality and true democracy. Housing associations were in this view a corporatist interest group, weighted heavily with social democratic members at the top, whose work to promote social housing was an extension of the social democratic welfare project. Housing associations were described as hegemonic centralised bureaucratic bodies that compensated their tenants with a type of 'influence' on house rules and social events.³⁰ But social democracy was failing the socialist project by pampering to the demands of the right - a criticism that had escalated ever since the 1966 Housing compromise, although the author considered the cumulative effect of post-war housing policy generally to have a detrimental effect.³¹ In this light housing associations were tools of power which hampered residents' freedom to truly participate in society.

His was not an isolated voice. Since 1970, the same year as residents' democracy was initiated, housing in the inner city of Århus became the subject of heated debate. Depopulation of families from the city centre was under way through the benefits of homeownership, leaving behind a population of privately renting elderly and students, whose housing needs were not fulfilled by the concurrent building of halls of residence.³² The central parts of the city lost around 100 people a month on average net during 1977-

79.³³ Radical students, academics and young people joined residents' grassroots movement across the city.

Central objectives for the groups were the formation of community or 'togetherness' (*fællesskab*). Their activities included ensuring road safety, and play areas for children, clearing enclosed yards to create shared garden spaces, and most importantly, challenging the housing acts of the early 1970s that allowed landlords to sell off flats in the older housing stock. This last problem was seen as the wellspring of many of the secondary causes of the breakdown of the urban community. Selling off private rented flats precipitated the suburbanisation process, and gentrified inner city areas, aided by the liberalised housing market that saw marked advantages to homeowners.³⁴ It was with these aims in mind, and armed with educational and socially aware resources that housing activists set out to promote their ambitions.

Political challenges

Within nine years 13 residents' groups of different sizes had been set up. The first was the *Sjællandsgade Beboerforening* in an area with approx. 5,000 residents immediately adjacent to the university campus. Others followed at Frederiksbjerg, Ole Rømers Gade and P.M. Müllersvej. Some were very active, initiating the formation of community meeting houses (*beboerhuse*), childcare and play areas, and some divided structurally into sub-groups concerned with traffic problems, newsletter writing and community building.³⁵ The role of architectural students should not be underestimated in the work of these organisations as they brought to their local neighbourhood work informed design and planning models, absorbed from current thought in architecture, including advocacy planning ideas.³⁶ In emphasising team work and the equal distribution of responsibilities the residents' movement showed a commitment to openness, non-hierarchical, and anti-authoritarian practices that stood in contrast to the organisational structures of local authorities and social housing associations.³⁷ To achieve their objectives they not uncommonly adopted extra-parliamentary tactics. The occupation of empty property, hanging banners from buildings that announced protests at rent policies and placing symbolically significant tenants (an elderly woman) in empty flats were elements in their repertoire of tactics. Rent boycotts were deployed in social housing associations.³⁸

Århusian housing actions were intentionally mostly peaceful and non-confrontational towards the police in order to ensure popular acceptance by the press. Indeed this was seen as a means to 'attack' the authorities at their weakest point:

.....the police is only one aspect of the peaceful line of action. This strategy of course is constructed around the fact that the various groups or movements don't have power and therefore do not own the official means to power. And that is central to the peaceful line, that you 'create' power i.e. act where your opponent is weakest. You 'play' on the contradictions inherent to the rulers, influence the public and decision making processes via the press and the like. The 'weakness' of the rulers is in this case the current housing policy, and the 'strength' of the residents' associations is the wide dissatisfaction with the encroachments the housing policy has enabled, and which influence enormously the life conditions of a broad section of the Danish population.³⁹

It became important to disseminate the ideological position of these groups in the face of the perceived imbalance in popular knowledge of their views. Action facilitated an expression of ideological protest and could become the site for victorious self-recognition within the groups, which in turn lent themselves to extensive narration and 'story-telling' as a means of self-promotion and self-conscious identity formation.

Apart from working on practical problems of living in the old housing stock, and demanding a greater say in their living circumstances, residents' groups reflected the wider issues concerning social movement culture of the early 1970s that included women's and environmental groups.⁴⁰ Politically some urban quarters increasingly came to represent the far left. In 1974 for example 19 % voted either SF or VS (the Socialist People's Party and the Left Socialists) in the Sjællandsgade area, rising to 43 % in 1981. This represented a challenge to the Social Democratic Party, whose election count overall dropped from 42 % in 1974 to 29 % in 1981.⁴¹ Echoing the shift in national government away from the traditional political groupings, Århusian local government saw a polarisation of its Council membership during the local elections of 1974. On the left SF (Socialist People's Party), VS (the Left Socialists), and the Communists (DKP) gained 5 mandates in Council. The Social Democrats lost 4, the Conservatives suffered an equivalent loss, while Venstre (the Left Liberals) gained one and Fremskridtspartiet (the far right Progress Party) gained 2. The shift on the left originated in the inner city areas, where the opposition to a liberalist housing policy was strongest.

Until then the Social Democratic Party had held a majority seat almost un-interrupted since 1917 (apart from the war years).⁴² In order to retain its majority on the *Magistrat* (the municipal executive), the Social Democrats and the three left wing parties, SF, VS and DKP agreed on an 11 point programme in 1975, that dealt with issues such as housing, residents' interests, the environment and transport. But this collaborative project was later abandoned in 1981, since the friction arose around compliance issues with conventional Council procedures.⁴³ The left demanded reconsideration of cases in committee that had already been decided on, and brought up 'popular' topics in Council debates without prior agreement. The notion of a social democratic consensus in both Århus and nationally was becoming problematic. Shifts in the housing market were a reflection of this, along with the economic crisis of the 1970s. Thus the residents' movement could be seen as contributing to a politicisation of a sphere that lay as much in the private lives of Århus residents as in the public sphere. This moved politics in a different direction from what social democracy had previously accepted as given. The social movements of the 1970s saw the grassroots housing movement play a role that seemed influential beyond its immediate locality.⁴⁴

Promoting the ideas of the residents movement

The medium of newsletter provided a vehicle to enhance the image of the residents movement. It promoted the internal cohesion of local groups, informing residents of activities and meetings with local authority representatives. Newsletters carried names such as *Kvarteret* (the Neighbourhood), *Teglstenen* (the Roof Slate) and *Beboeravisen* (the Residents' Newspaper) signalling the informality and parochial interests of the contents. The content spanned widely across issues of local history, covering information on recreational clubs and societies. As a forum where victories and losses could be shared, and where the local authority could be challenged, the newsletter provided an alternative to the local press, which, it was thought, did not present residents with balanced accounts of local events.⁴⁵

The press nonetheless supported certain causes when commentary on local democracy was at stake. During 1972 the residents' society, *Sjællandsgade beboerforening*, had occupied a bread factory, intending it to become a collective meeting place. After

initially rejecting the project the local authority seemed to accept the group as a serious player: it facilitated meetings between local authority delegates, the City Architect, the Conservative Alderman, Thorkild Simonsen from the Social Democrats and the residents' movement to convert the building. Child care demands in the area were discussed and car parking compromises were worked out. *Århus Stiftstidende* suggested the event evoked memories of former electoral meetings that could only strengthen democracy.⁴⁶ Here, it seemed, might be an opening that would permit a revision of the 'folkestyre' (people's government) that had suffered so badly over the preceding years. Århusian housing protests also achieved a profile in the national left wing press with tales of community action, as well as stories of strategies in the speculative housing market, and the subsequent consequences for tenants.⁴⁷ Thus the public profile of the residents movement was given a presence that provided it with a wide audience. Clearly the movement was intellectually resourceful and received support from beyond the city.

By the late 1970s, a radical publishing company was established within the local community house in the Sjøllandsgade area. Various publications evoking the social injustice of a capitalist housing market originated from here, such as Jens V. Svendsen's *Dansk boligpolitik og krisen (The Politics of Danish Housing and the Crisis)* from 1977, and the collectively authored handbook, *Kend din by, din rod (Know your City, your root)* (1983). The latter used a local history narrative and sociological observations to anchor resident consciousness in the city, and evoked a sense of local patriotism, albeit employing left wing politics to emphasise the contradictions existing within a capitalist urban community. By the time *Kend din by* had been published, a noticeable proportion of Turkish guest workers had arrived in Århus, mostly housed in areas such as Gellerupparken (discussed in the next chapter). The importance of this writing activity was intended to play a role in the formation of a collective identity for the city's residents.⁴⁸ In addition it was intended as a consciousness-raising medium to share information and the local politicisation of issues from below that would otherwise be subject to regulation from the local authorities, a condition that was an ever-present problem for the groups.⁴⁹

The Brammersgade project

If the residents' movement was concerned with social issues from an ideological position, there were few signs that they actively participated in programmes to resolve multiple social problems. They employed their symbolic power to mobilise public consciousness on local social issues. Their genuine concern to politicise everyday life, as well as transform society through struggle with established institutions of power, was an expression of radical leftist positions. But there is also a sense in which their activities were to some extent self-serving with regard to the problems of tenure, or creating comfortable recreational spaces in their surrounding neighbourhoods. Although interest groups enabled collaboration and strengthened their cause, there is little evidence that residents' groups embedded themselves in the deeper social problems existing in the city.⁵⁰

On the other hand, in order to substantiate the ideals of social change that demanded realisation in Århus a short-lived experimental project was initiated in an inner city area, Frederiksbjerg, in 1972. The Brammersgade Project was modelled on the contemporary British Community Development Project that will be discussed later. Where the student and academic activists focused on issues of national and local housing policy, the Brammersgade Project was implemented through the local authority's social services department who contributed staff to work with students and staff on placement from the Social High School in Århus.⁵¹ The Brammersgade project reflected a move to a British style casework process in social work when dealing with under-privileged children and their families from within the locality. The project's working methods were explicitly anti-bureaucratic and intentionally collective, and emphasised shared decision-making processes. An informal office was perceived to provide a more open and less distancing environment between staff and their clients, than centralised municipal social services could achieve.

The Project attempted to widen its scope in community development by contacting local residents' associations. In its final report the Brammersgade Project concluded that detailed knowledge of a locality was essential if staff were to give useful advice to so-called 'low-status residents.' However it was also clear that there was a significant distance in terms of cultural and social capital, education and intellectual resources,

between the residents' groups, whose level of local activity was relatively high, and socially disadvantaged residents.⁵² This in turn affected the level of democratic potential in local areas to the advantage of the more resourceful. This was an inescapable social paradox, since power in local democracy initially lay with the socially advantaged who demanded more influence in their everyday lives:

The drive [towards participation] is the demand for greater influence. This demand has not arisen particularly forcefully in the social sector and cannot be expected, when the weak clientele of this sector is considered. Rather it is in the efforts to re-establish the democratic processes and create a close, local democracy (*nærdemokrati*) and to influence physical planning that we first and foremost see the demand and community work deployed as a suitable vehicle.⁵³

The Brammersgade Project therefore concluded that the resolution to local social cleavages required a long-term commitment to building bridges between such groups. Where links had been created between the social groups, they had not survived beyond the life of the project. Regretfully the life of the project had depended on the goodwill of the municipal Social Services and Health Department. Although the project staff could not formally point to any direct opposition to its work, it had felt dis-empowered through implicit pressures from the management staff of the local authority.⁵⁴ Whether this was due to the unconventional working methods of the project team is not obvious from its final report. Yet a cultural distinction existed between local institutional traditions in the municipality and a new social work method that sought to construct solidarity and a sense of a close working community, as well as upholding egalitarian principles towards clients.⁵⁵

The type of local community work the Brammersgade Project piloted did not seem to achieve wide recognition in housing areas managed by social housing associations until the 1980s. Housing associations suffered economic pressures in the 1970s, leading to a less socially mixed resident base in new social housing areas. Increasing numbers of residents with a low level of cultural and social capital required a type of social welfare attention that had hitherto been maintained by the municipality. Thus a lone social worker was employed to manage a substantial caseload in the *Gellerup Plan* (see chapter 6) built by Brabrand Boligforening housing association on the outskirts of Århus in the late 1960s, discussed in the next chapter. She was the first social worker employed by a

housing association in Denmark, and her appointment signalled a change in the social welfare services provided by Danish social housing associations.⁵⁶ On the other hand the residents movement may have had indirect influence on changes in Danish local housing association philosophy as students and radicalised residents moved into new housing areas. The next chapter will consider the implications of this in a single housing area in Århus. Waves of participatory rhetoric and practice were perhaps influential, but whether it delivered its promise of a wider democratic life is another question.

Problems of social housing – distance and scale in Newcastle’s housing management, 1960s – 1970s

Local housing improvements in Newcastle were contingent upon national housing policy, which in this period saw a shift from large scale clearances to less intrusive improvement schemes.⁵⁷ This section will consider how the changes in Newcastle’s council housing strategies implicated residents and tenants in various levels of dialogue that reflect the level of participatory democracy made possible in the areas of the city where planning and public housing policy made a significant impact on people’s everyday lives. During the 1960s in the wake of Newcastle Council’s 1963 *Development Plan* housing in older, inner city areas such as Rye Hill, Benwell and Elswick in the west end of the city, and Byker and Walker in the east were subject to modernisation strategies that were intended to improve, revitalise and rebuild housing, and to improve the social ‘health and happiness’ of the residents in these dilapidated urban quarters.⁵⁸ The housing discourse and set of activities originating from within residents groups became increasingly politicised as they reacted to the physical and economic changes around them. It will be seen that Newcastle Council’s approach towards its residents was at best ambivalent in its management of housing discussions, while a range of residents’ groups diversified the debate and their internal tensions, which were attempted to be resolved through institutional organisation and advocacy.

The Council’s housing improvement strategies

During the 1960s Newcastle Council’s urban policies involved physical disruption to residential areas across the city. The social implications of this renewal work became complexified as development projects required liaison with residents and tenants. Contact, which nevertheless contained tension. The physical environment in housing

areas was undergoing changes that were referred to in the previous chapter: during the 1960s the local authority encouraged private homeowners to modernise their dwellings, while the municipality itself undertook new building projects and by the end of the decade moved towards revitalisation as its key strategy for improving the city's older housing stock. The 1969 Housing Act enabled the local authority to declare general improvement areas (GIA) targeting funds towards the revitalisation of housing that was mainly in a sound condition, and housing a stable community.⁵⁹ This was a move away from the totalising housing development strategies of the early 1960s, and could be seen as part of an effort to be more flexible and responsive to local needs, while at the same time keeping a check on public housing subsidies.⁶⁰ Dilapidated locales such as the Benwell Dene and Scotswood estates were primed as GIAs, with signs of environmental defects such as broken fences and walls, and untended gardens.⁶¹ Proposals to improve the external environment included the provision of footpaths, reducing traffic whilst also providing car parking spaces. Internally houses required new kitchens, bathrooms and new heating systems.

The intimate relationship between the physical environment and the social life lived around it was repeatedly evoked by Newcastle Council. Notions of public participation had been officially recognised in the 1969 Skeffington Report, albeit the level of systematic citizen involvement in individual municipalities was relative both in practice and in its effects.⁶² Repeatedly the idea of 'community' was incorporated into local newspaper reports, councillors' and civic officers' statements and was used by local residents themselves to provide a sense of shared involvement within their locales, as their surroundings were being physically developed, destroyed or improved around them. 'Community' appears to have had certain tacit, but differentiated sets of qualities which were rarely measured or investigated but taken for granted during a time when such local communities were undergoing structural and demographic change. A significant feature of community was the territorial and familial connection to an area. It was linked to the degree of mobility across the city, dependent on the level of local authority intervention in the housing system and wider social implications of late modern city life: de-industrialisation of inner city areas and the region as a whole, suburbanisation, and so the further polarisation of various social classes into specific urban areas.⁶³

In order to inform residents on the revitalisation strategies in the areas, the local authority held meetings, projected films and gave out information booklets.⁶⁴ Street committees were set up to create a participatory relationship with the municipality particularly in the Byker and Arthur's Hill areas.⁶⁵ Moreover, housing associations were in some cases actively engaged in urban renewal projects and new building after 1974, when the Housing Act gave non-profit making housing associations a wider role in social housing provision. The Northern Housing Group for example was involved in the Arthur's Hill improvement area, where it worked closely with the local authority and committees of local residents. Many residents had demanded to stay in the area near the friends and family of their community even while redevelopment work was being undertaken.⁶⁶

The 1974 Housing Act furthermore enabled Newcastle Council to supplement this localised revitalisation process by declaring housing action areas (HAA). Inner urban quarters suffered from particular 'housing stress.' By 1976 Newcastle had eight HAAs, encompassing 2,800 dwellings.⁶⁷ Where tenants were unable to modernise their dwellings subsidies of a maximum of £3,200 for each dwelling were provided. Municipal HAA advisory teams were enabled to encourage private landlords to improve their houses. Persuasion and pressure could be applied through repair notices. In cases where landlords failed to modernise, the Council would take out compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) and manage the modernisation work. Some landlords neglected the improvement of their property, but overall owner-occupiers benefited greatly from subsidies to improve their private homes. The imbalance in the distribution of grants was for example seen in North Benwell where GIA grants had been provided to 75 % of private owners, who constituted a little less than a third of the resident base.⁶⁸

A Housing Revitalisation Sub-Committee had also been established in 1973 to oversee and inspect overcrowded dwellings such as multi-occupied housing.⁶⁹ It distributed subsidies and had powers with regard to GIAs. It was specifically concerned to establish flexible relationships with homeowners, working towards deadlines in clearance programmes of up to 5 years, and saw its role as 'putting an end to the current practice of specifying lives for whole areas other than those within the clearance programme.' No longer was the urban modernisation programme of Newcastle subject to a total, utopian

vision of a complete well-functioning city unit as it had been in the 1960s, now urban management was proposed to be more flexible. The revitalisation project contained both a physical planning strand and an environmental health strand in the supervisory management of, in particular, private property owners' housing activities. Closely targeted and smaller scale projects became the strategy.⁷⁰

Despite the management concerns regarding the private sector Newcastle Council was itself generally slow to implement the housing modernisation programme. After three years it owned less than half of the housing in HAAs (1,065 dwellings) and only 360 had been modernised.⁷¹ Resistance had indeed been met from absentee landlords who considered improvement to be non-viable, and the price demanded by private builders for the improvement work was often higher than the levels of subsidy granted to pay for it. But maybe the persuasive strategies of the local authority should not be over-emphasised: in tackling housing deprivation in the west end Compulsory Purchase Orders were often declared and housing management turned in these cases to the problem of re-building and the allocation of housing to uprooted residents.

Some of the city's residents resided outside the housing system altogether. Following the 1974 Housing Act the responsibility for housing the city's homeless was moved from the Social Services Department to the Housing Committee. Thus the Tyneside Housing Aid Centre was set up by the charity Shelter in 1975. It provided casework and advisory services by social housing workers who co-ordinated contact to a similar range of welfare providers. Cases covered families disrupted by marital breakdown, households in debt struggling to pay their rent or mortgages and the young, particularly those who came from care.⁷² Disadvantaged single parent families made up a large proportion of the homeless.⁷³ Newcastle had 161 registered homeless families in 1973, although the numbers interviewed by the Council Housing Aid Centre were much higher at 672 – by 1976 altogether 948 families were interviewed by the Centre.⁷⁴ Temporary accommodation was provided at the Lancefield House (opened 1963) and Hill Court hostels. Thus Newcastle's housing strategies continued to reflect the changes in national housing policy. Although its aims for urban renewal became localised and were of a smaller scale than previous planning generations, its responsibilities diversified and its Housing Management Department faced new challenges.

Problems in the provision of housing advice

The Housing Committee was conscious that persuasion was always needed through promotional tactics such as show homes, leaflets, and door-to-door canvassing aimed at property owners (see chapter 4). This reflected an interest in the social activities or in-activities of homeowners and those private landlords who, it was feared, might neglect their duties in the service of urban modernisation. Nevertheless the bureaucratic organisation of the Housing Department and its various sub-agencies reflected a division of labour that placed physical planning in the driver's seat. It had in the past led to a removal of the decision making process to the Civic Centre, the home of the local authority administration, to processes that were less than transparent to Newcastle's residents. The luxury of the architecture of the Civic Centre, its precious materials and slightly out-of-date design stood in stark contrast to the real housing stress felt across the city's deprived areas.⁷⁵ Symbolically the city's monument to urban governance became the spectre of obscure political processes that held little meaning to residents living their everyday lives in the older urban quarters. Data being produced by the City's Planning Department to legitimise future clearances, re-vitalisation and re-housing plans were presented to the public in meetings or in the municipal newsletter *Civic News*, in an informal form that celebrated the future progress of the city's urban form, rather than clearly spelling out the immediate implications for residents in clearance areas.⁷⁶ Local sociologists observed that public meetings set up to hear CPO inquiries created misunderstanding and tension between residents concerned with details affecting their lives and local municipal officers and councillors executing bureaucratic and technical decision-making.⁷⁷ It was found that the level of insight achieved by Newcastle councillors into the realities of social issues were reliant on reports by the professional council officer.⁷⁸ Professionals had significant power in the decision making process of the municipality:

Part of the trouble inevitably and obviously stems from the fact that councillors are part time volunteers, elected for political reasons and not because they are planners, architects, teachers or whatever. The full time paid specialists must be better informed, but they could and should, make available to the members more and better information. The earlier this information is sent out to the councillors, the better: they cannot be expected to absorb the significance of a thick file of reports if it reaches them only the day before a meeting.⁷⁹

Some projects did appear to provide a relatively open space for dialogue between the Director of Housing, the Housing Department and the Council's tenants. Newcastle's Conservative Council established a Housing Advisory Centre in 1972. With funding from the national Urban Programme the centre was to function in an advisory capacity to all the city's residents.⁸⁰ The centre provided leaflets on topics relating to housing: from municipal provision to private renting and home ownership. Within the first month it received 466 enquiries on 51 subjects, of which 250 were subject to detailed interview.⁸¹ There was a need to provide information to individuals about their rights as tenants and landlords, while homeowners could learn more about home improvement grants or co-ownership from an official advisory body, which was later supplemented by the HAA advisory committees.

But the Centre was also a means to indirectly challenge the social welfare principles on which the local authority had provided housing until then, by making local housing needs the citizens' own responsibility:

To the extent that the private individual can be encouraged to provide, preserve, improve or renew his accommodation, so will future Local Authority problems and responsibilities (financial and otherwise) diminish.⁸²

The liberal notion that citizens would be free to make wider housing choices, give them a stake in the community and thus in the process make them better citizens had already been put forward in the Conservative Leadership's housing aims, when it proposed to sell Council owned land at Blakelaw for private building purposes in 1968.⁸³

Ideologically homeownership and the emphasis on the private realm was the lynchpin of the party's housing policy and had historically been deployed to bolster discussions of citizenship. Indeed this argument was deployed to attack the Labour Party for pursuing a housing strategy that was thought to be out of step with the times: its (the Labour Party's) 'thinking.... reeks of the 1890s [and] bears no relation to modern thought.'⁸⁴ Unfortunately, but not untypically, the Council's debate on the occasion of this proposal degenerated into personal attacks from both sides. It was probably true to say that the stated obligations of council tenants towards meeting their own housing needs ignored the problem of their actual capacity to do so.

In the final count this initial attempt to encourage homeownership in council tenants and young couples did not succeed. After two years only 74 council houses had been sold out of a possible 30,000. The figure of total council houses was 40,000 including maisonettes, flats and bungalows, which it became possible to buy.⁸⁵ Indeed by 1974 Labour Councillors argued that many residents had been unable to get a mortgage, leading the Council to buy back part of the land at Blakelaw. Furthermore it proposed to buy houses on privately built housing estates, and would itself provide mortgages to young couples moving into improved housing.⁸⁶ At the time a further arm in the social housing management was starting to become a more forceful presence. The existence of housing associations in Newcastle in the mid-1970s was growing and influential community organisations would make their position clear in discussion with the local authority.

Newcastle Council's project to create dialogue: decentralisation of the municipal housing service

In order to understand and tackle the deprivation surfacing in the city's inner areas, the Housing Committee co-founded a Community Development Project (CDP), funded by the Newcastle Council and the national government's Urban Aid programme. The CDP will be considered in more detail below, however it is worth emphasising here that the area based, territorial 'case approach' was adopted in the city to decentralise the housing welfare service and attempt to co-ordinate a more joined-up way of facilitating social improvements across a diversity of problems. For their part professional council housing management strategies looked to decentralisation as a means to facilitate a more closely targeted financial approach, and at the same time to recover resources from within the urban communities themselves that might encourage social cohesion and participation – hence the notion of 'community development' was conjured up as a highly enabling resource.

John Dixon, the Director of Housing for Newcastle Council, enthusiastically expressed a desire to include tenants in participatory processes by welcoming the views of tenants' associations.⁸⁷ Participation 'was going to be the new thing in housing.' No longer would housing officers express a distancing attitude by speaking of 'our' tenants or 'our' houses.

By decentralising housing management services to area offices citizens would see that housing management belonged to the community and not to the town hall. Dixon expressed the hope that tenant representatives might one day be represented on district committees alongside councillors, where they would have power over budgets, some maybe even becoming members of the Housing Committee. Indeed new tenants' associations were welcomed, and Dixon did support many of the associations' requests at Housing Management Committee meetings.⁸⁸ He for example encouraged a new tenants' association in the Cowgate area, proposing to provide rent-free meeting premises for their use.

Involving tenants in this way would encourage more care and interest in the locality. Dixon also predicted the decline of vandalism, while tenants could even be given some say in the design of their houses by choosing colour schemes, becoming involved in modernisation, or, he hoped, some might even join co-operative or co-ownership schemes. Aspects of this process had already been initiated in Newbiggin Hall, Scotwood and Byker in the form of Advisory Committees, and will (in the case of Byker) be considered in the next chapter. For some this proposed influence was not far-reaching enough. The Director of the Benwell CDP, Ian Harford, considered that tenants' associations should take full control of all management responsibilities. This was a radical proposition that would probably have threatened the position of ward councillors and those interests within the Housing Department who still felt they required over-all control of the wider structural conditions of the city's municipal housing.⁸⁹

'Participation' had been a key expression in urban community action and development projects since the 1960s.⁹⁰ For some community activists direct action by residents was the key to achieving improvements in local social conditions rather than following a process incorporated into local governmental systems.⁹¹ However to enable the process oriented dimension of participation its fullest means of expression from the point of view of the Council, the municipal Housing Management department was re-structured to engage with residents in local housing areas. Whether the notion that participatory processes could be 'given' top-down to groups by those in managerial positions presented a paradox did not appear to be a problem to council officials. The question whether this was due to a hegemonic 'co-option' of the population's means of expression was a notion

that in contrast concerned community workers throughout the period as will be considered later.⁹²

The implementation of the City's housing management service re-fashioned the model of community planning that had been part of planning discourse for most of the post-war period. The Housing Management department divided its operational units into district housing offices. The purpose of the decentralisation would be to improve efficiency, strengthen middle management, pay closer attention to the appearance of housing estates and alleviate staff of some of their bureaucratic routines.⁹³ Each Office aimed to cover 10,000 households. An area Housing Management Assistant would be in charge of local Housing Officers with responsibilities for rent collection, arrears, estate management and repairs. House visits to collect rent were abandoned as staff had been physically attacked in course of their duties, and tenants had paid rent at housing offices since the early 1960s. In overall charge was a team of four Assistant Directors of Housing respectively responsible for Finance and Administration, Housing and Training, Management and Development, and Technical Services.⁹⁴ In this way the Housing Management Committee sought to introduce a greater level of communication with housing areas, in order to encourage closer dialogue with tenants.

There seemed to the local officials no tension in attempting to reconcile municipal managers working within a corporate model with the application of such management processes in dealing with the less systematically organised residents' associations. When Shelter reported that the city's west end was a 'disaster area' and proposed that in order to deal with multiple deprivation the Housing Committee should set up neighbourhood councils to provide information and support for grassroots groups, the response from the local authority was to defend its existing work with residents' associations as somewhat successful.⁹⁵ Nevertheless towards the end of the 1970s sociological research was revealing that the public administration of Newcastle Council in many ways continued to be impenetrable for the layman seeking information on particular policies.⁹⁶ The transparency of political structures remained elusive as bureaucratic structures inside both the local Labour Party and the Council's Committees were to a large extent controlled by Council Officers. The conservative nature of an unyielding municipal bureaucracy

weighed against the apparent willingness of the housing professions within it to create a more open meeting place with tenants.

The Benwell Community Development Project and the uses of housing associations

In its efforts to decentralise its housing services Newcastle Council sought to positively promote tenants' associations. The aim was to alleviate inner city social distress in specific areas and develop a more resourceful tenant base. That is, improvement of housing management by developing the social capital of residents according to contemporary notions of a decentralised housing service. One means of creating tenant associations in deprived areas was through the Benwell Community Development Project (BCDP) – a resource that would focus on particular urban areas in close dialogue with tenants and residents. While tenants' associations represented a degree of proactive agency within the history of social housing in Newcastle they were more commonly reactive in their approaches to their housing condition. The diversity of tenants' associations and their tactics will be considered in the next section. This section will consider the position taken by the BCDP towards local housing providers that helped inform and constitute its activities when working to build local relationships with residents in a deprived area of Newcastle.

BCDP was established in 1972, funded partly under the national Government's Urban Programme, and partly by the municipality of Newcastle. Its objective was to use action-research to investigate the causes of urban deprivation, co-ordinate social welfare services to ameliorate a range of social problems in the West End of Newcastle, whilst encouraging disadvantaged communities to support themselves over time. In the view of the national Community Development Project the BCDP adopted radical interpretations of its relationship to local government.⁹⁷ It employed an explicitly Marxist approach to its historical investigations that were reflected in a series of publications on local Tyneside and Newcastle history, such as *The Making of a Ruling Class* (1978), *Pendower. Whatever happened to the homes for the heroes* (1978) and *Slums on the Drawing Board* (1978).

Working from an office in Benwell, with access to groups of tenants who lived in various deprived areas, the BCDP encouraged active tenant engagement through the publication

of newsletters and information exchange within its offices. It continuously called for adequate repairs and the demolition of unsafe housing.⁹⁸ Explanations of social inequalities were not sought in the model of social pathology, which had occupied local housing officers in defining problematic tenant groups in deprived areas. It found a more plausible explanation in social changes caused by historical and structural shifts in industrial capitalist nations.⁹⁹ In a sense the BCDP was appointed to resolve social issues based on a pragmatic policy to manage local area-based housing and social welfare issues. It in turn employed as symbolic of a wider disintegration of social equality in Western capitalist societies. The tension inherent in integrating these sets of constructions of housing and social problems would lie as an under-current throughout the working life of the Project.

The BCDP for example studied and worked within a particular housing estate, Noble Street and Norwich Place. The Project described in detail how the institutional processes of housing policy, from the construction of the buildings to the developing ghettoisation and stigmatisation of its tenants had condemned the area to decline, compounded by the growing problems of unemployment in the locality.¹⁰⁰ The area had been used as the scapegoat in Council debates during party political squabbles from its inception in the 1950s. Although solutions to tackling poverty and vandalism in the area had been dealt with through temporary solutions such as repairs to the external environment, the tenants and the BCDP called for the complete demolition of the flats throughout the 1970s.¹⁰¹ As the area was acknowledged as being unfit for families, proposals suggested either offering it up as halls of residents for students or to hand it over to a housing association, neither of which were adopted. Instead BCDP perceived the final solution to the problem as arising from tenant activity: publishing newsletters and meeting to mobilise responses to local authority inaction. When the flats were finally demolished the perception was one of vindication for tenants, whose hard work had achieved much in the face of local authority hesitance and resistance. However the existence of the Council as landlord and housing manager was never questioned by the BCDP.

The BCDP in this way employed the rhetoric and practices of community action to mobilise tenant activity. However, although the BCDP seemed progressive in its radical stance towards social solutions for housing, it reacted negatively to the idea of housing

associations as alternative providers of social housing.¹⁰² Responding to the persistent problems of improving pre-1914 housing stock in the North Benwell GIA through private initiatives, BCDP called for increased local authority intervention. Private sector landlords could not be relied on to invest in modernisation. Historically a few housing improvement schemes had moreover been undertaken by local housing associations (see chapter 2), yet in Newcastle the contribution to housing construction and improvement by housing associations had by 1973 been modest.

In Newcastle the development of the new style associations made possible by a Housing Act in 1964 seemed to lag behind national contributions. Shelter suggested that Tyneside had missed out on the development of the newer type, small housing associations.¹⁰³ Neither had the Conservative Council proactively engaged housing associations during the later 1960s. Indeed the low numbers of houses built by local housing associations in Newcastle reflected their dependence on restricted funding opportunities. They therefore concentrated on the maintenance and modernisation of existing housing stock (some, such as Newcastle Housing Improvement Trust modernised older houses and flats in the West End of the city rather than built new housing). Over a five-year period from 1968 to 1973 the largest number of houses built by a housing association in the city was 443 by the North Housing Association.¹⁰⁴ Figures were commonly well below this: Woodland Housing Trust Ltd. had built 133 units; Help the Aged Housing Association Ltd., 67; Cheviot Housing Association, 72; Johnnie Johnson Housing Trust Ltd., 48 units, and others had been given loans for improvement purposes. Larger associations, such as North East Housing Association (NEHA), later North Housing Association, dominated across the North East. By 1979 the NEHA managed 20,000 dwellings albeit many of these were not in the Newcastle area. In total there were 15 housing associations active in the city in 1973, both local and national organisations. The BCDP therefore had little first hand experience of the housing association system. It might be suggested that since Newcastle Council operated with the taken for granted notion that it had the full responsibility of providing social housing it had until then not actively pursued alternative means of social housing provision.

Despite its lack of experience of housing associations locally the BCDP put forward ideological and practical reasons for rejecting housing association contributions to

housing improvements: describing housing associations as historically rooted in philanthropy.¹⁰⁵ Mostly such associations were small and their limited contribution to Newcastle's housing provision was emphasised; indeed associations had built only 5 %-8 % of new housing in the city. Although it agreed that decentralised housing management was needed, the BCDP criticised the housing management by associations as inadequate to the task - their small size (only five managed more than 100 units) made their administration 'weak and unstable'. Staff often worked part time, was temporary and not wholly committed to the housing cause. The corporatist nature of a non-elected Board of Management was worrying; it lacked the accountability of a local authority. Indeed housing associations represented an implicit criticism of local authority provision. There was no evidence that tenants were given a better deal by this sector, their tenancies were not secured, while its housing management was paternalistic. The BCDP was clear – housing associations were not a solution to housing welfare.

Much of the commentary by the BCDP echoes themes described in the Cohen Committee's findings from 1971, particularly the issue of small, mismanaged housing associations.¹⁰⁶ What it neglected to consider was the provision in the 1974 Housing Act for the increased accountability and regulation arising from the registration of associations with the Housing Corporation. No doubt support for housing associations did represent a critique of the failure both of private renting and municipal provision.¹⁰⁷ But the generalised ideological objection to housing associations as resonating with a perception of charity and philanthropy carrying resonances from historical social structures seemed somewhat unjustified. By 1975 the new style housing associations arising from the 1964 Housing Act had dominated the provision by housing associations at the national level, while older associations underwent transformations in order to adapt to changes in policy and their relationship with local authorities.¹⁰⁸

Such a critique of housing associations suggests that the BCDP's perception of social housing provision was coloured by a view that dichotomised housing provision between the state and the market, with an emphasis on the state as sole provider of social and housing services. It was unable to discern an alternative to housing provision in a third sphere, civil society, the sphere that the CDP itself was appointed to promote, albeit in an experimental way. Indeed the BCDP might have had the US residual model in mind

when it commented negatively on housing associations.¹⁰⁹ Had their implicit comparison turned towards the Scandinavian (or European) housing systems different models for managing social housing may have appeared. Thus the BCDP retained the model of state provided social housing, reiterating a historical system that by the mid-1970s was feeling the effect of long-term residualisation processes the BCDP was in place to help to ameliorate.

The BCDP did not see the housing association providers as allowing a more socially just means of managing social housing. In their view, charitable associations would perpetuate the continuing paternalistic treatment of people in housing need. The BCDP was instead keen to see modern housing management practices incorporating tenant voices in a fully inclusive form. But the limited scope the Project had been given in Newcastle – to co-ordinate social welfare provision in a single area – and its limited life-span as an experimental project (it was wound up in 1978) was not conducive to enable a coherent movement towards tenant participation across the city.

A Question of Participation

Where, one might ask, would information and provisions of resources for citizen participation then come from, if a democratic dialogue were to be made possible? From the late 1960s it was housing management practice to accept constructive dialogue with tenants associations. From the point of view of community workers, such as the BCDP, whose role it was to embed such knowledge in the local population, this became a struggle, not just at the local level. For some the local became the symbol of much wider inequalities of a structural nature that saw class struggle and conflict as the means to social change.¹¹⁰ Local government in such a view became one focus for opposition, perceived to be a site through which dominant forces could act out their hegemonic rule. However it is clear that the perception of working with the Council varied amongst tenant associations, and tensions between resident groups themselves should not be underestimated in fragmenting the notion of a shared space for dialogue. Tenant Associations varied across the city due to their history and the contemporary contingencies making their various conditions more or less urgent as housing developments progressed.¹¹¹ Albeit their approach to their housing situation was

commonly reactive, tenant associations adopted different degrees of compromise or subversion in their communications with local housing providers.

Historically, influence by tenants' associations on Council housing management had mostly depended on written letters, petitions and piecemeal requests or demands from the associations, sometimes backed by press coverage of their cases.¹¹² The subsequent solutions were at the discretion of the Housing Committee. In the absence of systematic procedures that would enable dialogue with tenants, the influence held by tenants was reliant on the establishment of sub-committees such as the Rye Hill Working Party or the later GIA working parties.¹¹³ Following the Skeffington Report in 1969 local government was encouraged to include residents in its planning processes, and as was outlined earlier the Housing Department declared its commitment to incorporating tenant voices. But in some cases the Skeffington Report was found lacking in creating this desired forum for dialogue, as Norman Dennis had found in Sunderland.¹¹⁴

Tenants' associations arose in Newcastle for different reasons, albeit many in response to complaints. Construction faults, neglect to provide amenities, and the later clashes around levels of participation in planning and revitalisation provoked joint efforts by tenants to face the Council.¹¹⁵ Although reactive by nature, some associations adopted a more proactive effort to establish a meaningful and constructive life on their housing estates. The roots for such community building efforts could be found on early suburban council estates, which had found themselves partially excluded from neighbouring urban areas, while needing a central focus for their local social activities.¹¹⁶ Yet building a 'community' on new estates required constant work, and those tenants who assumed that the estate needed tighter social relations locally made continuous calls for active neighbourhood involvement.¹¹⁷ The tenants' association on the new suburban council estate, Newbiggin Hall for example, used its newsletter to encourage participation by residents after its opening in the early 1960s.¹¹⁸ The Association was a member of the National Federation of Tenants Associations, and it saw itself as an interest group representing the needs of the estate's tenants to the local authorities. The newsletter of the association was sent out free to tenants, and mainly provided information on the clubs, social events and children's activities held in the area. It also reported on communication with the housing authorities that was shaped by compromise and

negotiation. Thus the association's annual general meetings allowed tenants' complaints to be addressed face to face with Councillors. Complaints concerned the need for local amenities such as shops, playing fields and a community centre. But when councillors confronted what they perceived to be ungrateful tenants, they received diplomatic responses that evoked local pride in the estate, aroused by the newness of the environment, the open spaces, the tidy front lawns and the modern housing.¹¹⁹ The new council estate had allowed families to settle down to long-term domestic privacy. Most tenants here had vastly improved their housing conditions, having moved from slums in the Scotswood Road area.¹²⁰ The tenant association in this area therefore functioned to overcome transitional issues and provided the glue to bond the new area's social life.

Within the city, by contrast, a more radical initiative, the West End Tenants' Association (WETA) arose from the antagonistic meetings with the Council during the 1960s. It published a *Bulletin* from 1967 to update residents on developments in the area's revitalisation schemes and the protest actions the association initiated as part of a campaign to establish a voice for residents.¹²¹ Characteristically the tone of the *Bulletin* was defiant.¹²² It represented the work of WETA as a struggle against a bureaucratic system in which neither political wing was supportive of the real problems facing residents on a day-to-day basis. The association made a series of demands such as a call for a reduction in the level of rent increases, it demanded that the Council move out tenants whose houses were to be revitalised, called for the Council to brick up empty houses.¹²³ The WETA made it clear that conventional parliamentary procedures were an insufficient means to achieve the association's aims, and demonstrations in the form of deputations to visit the Civic Centre were organised, fronted by a local woman who was represented as a resourceful tenant.¹²⁴ Thus the WETA demanded direct democratic access to decision making, rather than being accommodating to the representative democratic system as the Skeffington recommendation had proposed.¹²⁵

The WETA sought to radically politicise everyday life in working class areas. Following the local authority elections in 1968, the WETA represented tenant groups as a 'serious election threat.' The association had received 243 of the local votes in the Armstrong Ward, compared with Labour who achieved 493 and the Conservatives with 361:

It would be useful to have spokesmen for the tenants in the new Council chamber. But we don't put great trust in representatives. We believe that people get what they want only if they speak for themselves and act for themselves, together. This way they can shape their own lives because, being involved participants, they have grassroots democracy and being united, they are strong. We would like the West End Tenants' Association to develop into an organisation where people have this sort of power. A lot of you voted for us, but it is no use just voting - for us or for anyone else.¹²⁶

Such community action principles encouraged a view of a liberated tenant and residents group that could freely fight for their right to improved housing in the city. In a similar spirit the association established an Action Centre in Elswick in 1972. Volunteers, some of them students living locally, provided advice and facilitated contact with local authority contacts at the Civic Centre to ensure residents received support in tackling issues such as having repairs made to their homes and to solve problems relating to social security payments. Some tenants required support with basic literacy skills and the Centre provided resources for letter writing and information exchange. It would seem that some residents misunderstood the function of the centre. Although it received support from the Child Poverty Action Group, and the radical Claimants' Union, the Centre rejected acting as a provider of social casework, in order to reinforce an image of community self-help.¹²⁷ Thus it would seem a tension arose between the ideals of self-help and the acute needs of the less resourceful. Indeed by the early 1970s the WETA pronounced its militant intentions of consciousness raising in the struggle against the City Council.¹²⁸ But if such tenants' associations presented themselves as seeking social justice through their activities, the fundamental social divisions between tenants' and residents' groups led to a fracture in the view of a coherent tenant discourse.

Social distinctions and differentiations in local housing areas

The local authority decentralised its housing services and set up a Priority Areas Programme in 1976, in order to enable a targeted response to multiple deprivation. Local community groups, including tenants' associations, competed for and often received funds to set up local community meeting rooms or houses.¹²⁹ Some tenants' associations were granted a degree of voice in the running of their areas by the local authority. Slatyford Tenants' Participation Committee held a string of responsibilities including the right of tenants to make recommendations on the housing policy for its area, on the improvement of the external environment, tenants keeping pets, and decisions on general

tenancy conditions. It received a monthly list of new tenants moving to the area.¹³⁰ It was clear that in a case where tenants' associations were to achieve such a degree of self-governance the Council needed to make information available to enable adequate consultation.¹³¹ The Association was in this way enabled to police itself, through knowledge of new tenants and the 'code of conduct' it had been partly responsible for. Nevertheless, the ambivalent position of self-policing and being subject to local authority control meant that in instances of 'breaches of tenancy conditions' (such as rent arrears) it felt embarrassed - maybe even compromised.

Self-policing and defensive retrenchment also played a role in the formation of tenants and residents' associations, which in the name of 'community' sought to exclude unsuitable groups. In the cases where the Housing Department re-housed poorer tenants on estates that defined themselves as 'respectable,' established tenants felt threatened and so attempted to exclude such re-housed groups from 'their' estate. This was the case at the Kenton Bar council estate, where the local tenants' association argued that their Parker-Morris standard, 'luxury housing estate,' should not receive tenants on the rent rebate scheme. They were not 'the right' type of tenant and were not interested in their houses.¹³² The stigma attached to particular groups of tenants also led to homeowners in inner city areas fearing the devaluation of their homes if 'rag tag families' were placed there by the council. In the search for social harmony communities seemed to close in upon themselves. Social order was imagined to exist in the homogeneous clustering of social groups and organising them in spatially segregated areas:¹³³

Private homes should stay private and council estates should be for council tenants. Everyone here [Condercum Estate, Benwell] feels the same way. We don't want our streets to become like the ropery council estates next to us.¹³⁴

The notion that communities were shaped around carefully maintained territorial boundaries that included 'us', but excluded 'them' was to be found in the processes that shaped the relationship between inner city residents and the Council's Housing Department. It would be necessary to provide guidance or codes of conduct in creating harmonious communities as the city's renewal projects progressed. Tenant associations may provide a forum for dialogue, but required some form of apparatus to enable reflective social cohesion.

Bridging the communication gap: the Newcastle Tenants' Federation

A few years before council housing was opened to ownership, an integrated approach to communicating between residents and their housing authority was initiated. It has been shown that a variety of tenants' and residents' associations had been set up, with varying approaches to participation and notions of social differentiation. Out of this community activism, and encouraged by the local authority, an umbrella organisation, the Newcastle Tenants' Federation (NTF) was set up in 1977. The organisation covered 20 tenants' associations and was staffed and funded by the local authority, but the NTF was to be an independent consultative organ, representing the interests of council tenants.¹³⁵ The BCDP was coming to the end of its tenure as advocate of Newcastle's poorest residents. Yet continuing community activism recognised that tenants' associations in many cases shared similar concerns that needed to be co-ordinated. The aims of the NTF were to provide centralised support for tenant groups, and to facilitate meetings with Newcastle Council.¹³⁶ However the self-perception of the Federation was less as a partner, than subject to Council acceptance. A Tenants' Charter was therefore proposed in 1975 to clarify the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and the Council. The Housing Management Committee initially rejected the idea despite the Housing Officer's declarations on consulting tenants' associations. Yet, after national pressure the Charter was agreed.¹³⁷

Tenants had found it difficult to follow meetings with Council representatives, and the NTF proposed new procedures to enable clearer lines of communication with the Housing Department. The Federation recognised that concepts of participation and influence carried degrees of ambiguity, and that many tenant activities had been reactive to Council decisions - indeed suggested that this was precisely the way the Council had interpreted the consultation process. By the end of the 1970s the NTF recognised that tenants' views were included in the management of some of the 8 council housing areas of the city. Tenants had requested the right to modernise their own homes, and requested a series of rights to consultation and the improvement of their condition of tenancy.¹³⁸ Yet, there seemed to be incompatibilities between the good intentions of the Council in incorporating rights and obligations in the tenancy handbook, and the actual understanding of the document by many tenants. It would seem that gaps continued to

exist in the communication process between tenants' organisations and the Council. Indeed the Federation noticed a 'conflict of interest' between a municipal landlord concerned with the problem of housing economies, and tenants whose daily lives were qualitatively affected by the conditions of housing management. Although not explicitly stated, the objection was formulated in terms of consumer rights:

...tenants are concerned with the quality of service they get in return for their rents and rates, as well as extending their rights and choices. Housing managers are concerned with making the best use of limited resources both in terms of housing stock and finance.¹³⁹

A conclusion that seems to have remained unchanged throughout the life of the Council's post-war housing management responsibilities.

The role of the Tenants' Federation was to mediate and provide advocacy at moments of negotiation to manage potential conflict when dilemmas arose. On the surface the Federation was a constructive forum for tenants to present their views. That there seemed to be no formally constituted, devolved democratic process of mediating housing management suggests the Federation was an extension of the ad hoc processes in which tenants' associations had arisen in the city in the past - and so subject to continuing the ambivalence of Council recognition. The NTF embodied the continuation of the radical community action and development activity in Newcastle from the middle of the 1960s in an institutionalised form. However it had by now evolved into a body of unelected salaried staff who represented tenancy right as issues of housing consumption.¹⁴⁰ Its focus turned around the point at which rights and obligations of Council tenants and the Council's responsibilities towards its dependents met - but described through an antagonistic model. Maybe this was a remnant of a much longer historical process of a paternalistic municipal service that was resistant to fundamentally renew its governmental process, and so was disinclined to include a deciding voice from its tenants.

Comparative Implications

Since we are mostly the economically powerless, *Samvirke's* [transl. Co-Operative] work is forced to be only ideological and political in nature – to achieve influence in systems of representation. The struggle to improve housing conditions in the urban quarters for the benefit of the present residents must be seen as part of the social struggle between [property] owners and those with no property. The work is clearly linked to this struggle.¹⁴¹

Beboerbladet for Rosengade Kvarteret, Nov. 1974, 15

Mrs Thompson's group [in Benwell] fears the resident may become resigned, stop fighting for information and greater choice. At their most bitter they write [in the Benwell 'Observer']: "It all adds up to blackmail, upset and hardship. So why didn't the planners ask people what they want before it's too late to change the plans?... (And we hear that in Byker, people are told six months in advance what house they are going to get!)"

An angry voice from the wilderness, Evening Chronicle, 18.04.1974

A comparison of the democratic culture within the housing systems of Århus and Newcastle in the 1970s shows that similar movements were afoot in the cities. Residents' associations in inner city areas of Århus shared the principles of housing action with particular groups in Newcastle. The messages of fee discussion and influence on residents' housing conditions were strong in both cities. Groupings of tenants and residents were however diverse, from groups committed to debate, negotiation and compromise with the municipal administrative system in Newcastle and residents engaged in the democratic housing culture in Danish housing associations, to radical groups dedicated to urban improvement schemes in their local urban quarters.

In both cities, as in most large European cities, the legacy of the large scale planning and building efforts of the 1950s and 1960s were being felt. Newcastle's Labour Party had had ambitious visions for the city, which by the early 1970s were redundant in the face of economic crisis, changes in national housing policy and shifts in the local political leadership. The housing system in Århus had traditionally worked at a local scale on small to medium sized projects. However with national construction policy aiming at grand-scale system building in the 1960s the ambitions of local authorities and housing associations grew. Thus consortia, such as Contact, working in a corporatist culture

typical of the Danish post-war social democratic model, were introduced as a potential actor on the Århusian housing scene.¹⁴² Despite initial efforts at small-scale slum clearance and a system built housing area built by five housing associations, the large flatted estates planned and built by individual housing associations had a greater visual and material impact on the city's landscape. In effect the consortium's slum clearance projects reflected a small part of housing activity in Århus compared to the renewal projects by Newcastle Council, and so reveal the differences in scale of the clearance issue and its solution in the two cities. Similar attempts in the Tyneside area to set up a housing consortium on the initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government had had little effect, as the construction firm that was contracted soon went into liquidation.¹⁴³ Thus in both cities, centralisation of decision making had been taking place in the 1960s, which in the following decade seemed remote and unacceptably powerful.

The distance of the local authority administration in Newcastle, and the perceived democratic inadequacies of the social housing providers in Århus by certain residents groups, led to upheaval in conventional perceptions of citizenship in both cities. The housing association movement in Århus was committed to a particular form of residents' democracy, which from 1970 decentralised key decision making processes to representatives of residents in the local housing areas. Centrally the association as a whole continued to be managed as a business, with national bodies to represent collective responses to government policy. Housing activists in Århus interpreted the institutionalised democratic system in housing associations as incapable of creating social justice to ameliorate an imbalance in social conditions in the city's housing. This challenge to the continuing social democratic tradition in housing associations was made clear when the Business Manager of AAB in Århus was interviewed by a local residents' newsletter on his future intentions for AAB: the long-standing tradition of the association would continue and he had in principle no objection to residents' groups.¹⁴⁴ However such groups should work on recreational activities. When they involved politics it often became a matter of subjective opinion. The housing association as a whole encouraged voters to elect the parties most supportive of the housing cause – as an administrator he was not able to embrace the politicisation of everyday life that housing activists required.

Although they had a long history of being serious players in the local housing system in Århus, housing associations shared a sense of being between state and market that radical housing proponents could not accept. Danish housing associations negotiated the difficult balance between national policy and the needs of their local bureaucratic apparatuses to provide a fair housing apparatus. This was the problem also highlighted in Newcastle by Benwell Community Development Project when it rejected housing associations as useful contributors to Newcastle's housing. The question of accountability, and a professional administrative apparatus required to run a housing service efficiently and fairly, was raised. Despite their effectiveness as administrators of social housing and their residents' democratic potential, social housing associations were equally dismissed by housing activists in Århus: housing associations were impotent when faced with existing political powers. In Århus during the 1970s young radical activists, many of them students, reacted towards an increasingly liberalised housing policy defined by the government from the mid-1960s. It is probably not coincidental that residents' democracy (*beboerdemokrati*) and Århusian housing activism arose almost simultaneously, and indeed echo similar themes arising in the contemporary history of Newcastle. Danish democracy seemed to be undergoing a shift away from the traditional 'folkestyre,' a class-based politics with popular participation in party political associations, to something less formal and more 'issues' based, reflected in the establishment of new parties at the 1973 general election.¹⁴⁵ Diverse understandings of democracy and participation affected views of citizenship. Shared action strategies included publishing information bulletins and newsletters, petitions and demonstrations. Housing action in Newcastle and Århus in many cases shared the fundamental belief that the overthrow of a capitalist society would be the solution to problems of de-industrialisation, the residualisation of social housing, and the exclusion of tenants from a fair housing system.

Yet despite such shared elements there are signs that the activists constituted different social groups. Århus was the seat of a major university as well as other higher education institutions.¹⁴⁶ The immigration of young people to the city affected the tone and agenda of the city's housing developments and urban improvement schemes. Young people might live in shared, rented private accommodation in the older housing of the city, including communes and cohabiting communities (*bofællesskaber*).¹⁴⁷ The resident base

in social housing areas was commonly families from skilled or unskilled social groups with a set of different priorities. Their relatively new housing areas were being maintained by local technical staff employed by the housing association. While the local democratic system in their housing area gave them the opportunity to participate in local decision making, the national debate on local democracy was attempting to disseminate such opportunity across the city. Indeed it was this local democracy that housing activists claimed to have won in Århus – just as tenants' groups in Newcastle represented their tensions with the Council as the means to make real changes locally.¹⁴⁸ In both cities housing activists stood at local elections, less to win, maybe, than to make a mark on local authority consciousness that they were forces to be reckoned with.

Educated young people may have privately rented in older housing, but their desire to improve their immediate environment, building playgrounds and ensuring traffic safety measures in collaboration with the Council revealed a level of resource that did not have the equivalent in Newcastle's run-down areas. The Brammersgade Project concluded that urban quarters where residents' action was strong revealed schisms with those residents whose social resources were low. In Århus there was no nationally implemented Urban Programme such as Newcastle had employed in setting up the BCDP. Instead resourceful students from the Århus School of Architecture drew up local road maps and plans to present to the Council; local history and social science students researched and wrote dissertation on local activities, while publications highly informed on theories of political economy and the politics of the urban and subjectivity were accompanied by 'naïve' drawings to soften the sometimes politicised nature of the writing.¹⁴⁹ In contrast residents in Newcastle's inner areas were supported by experimental projects to build up the social capital in local neighbourhoods. Tenants' Associations required meeting houses, and access to the infrastructure required to print and publish newsletters; some residents needed help with basic literacy. In comparison with the training of tenants in Newcastle to enable and strengthen their participatory skills, which seems to have been minimal or at best ad hoc, the access to training resources within the Århusian social housing association system was systematic and well organised.

If residents in Newcastle's older housing areas were concerned with the housing policy of the local authority and the devastation clearances were having on the everyday lives of

the poorest social groups in the city, the Århusian residents' movement took a similarly parochial approach in their protest activities. Yet where the BCDP was brought in to assist local residents in their local communities to deal with multiple deprivation and to deploy a targeted approach to local community building, the Århusian residents' movement was less an assimilated attempt at rescuing and empowering local communities, than a localised, politicised grassroots organisation, constituted by a variety of voices spread across the city's urban quarters. It might be suggested that it resembled the WETA more than the BCDP, but these divisions between professional and grassroots interests are to some extent questionable when the shared political concerns and the extra-parliamentary activities encouraged by the groups are taken into account.

The principles of nurturing citizenship through participatory process was shared by all these groups, albeit the meaning of participation was contentious and ambiguous. Learning the rules of the local political game was a time-consuming and involving project for any individual. Both local authorities had views on the rules of exchange and participation, which in both cities became stretched. Newcastle Council's history of strong central management was rigidly inflexible towards new participatory processes, and only two areas felt the value of new housing management ideas: One, the Arthur's Hill urban renewal project that was managed by the North East Housing Association, the other was Newcastle Council's housing and urban renewal project at Byker, in large part facilitated by an externally resourced private architects' office and local voluntary services. In Århus, as social democracy was facing increasing competition from the left and the right, there was a willingness to collaborate with residents groups to improve inner city environments. However a paradox remained – never addressed by either side – that such improvements seemed to speed up the inner city's gentrification process - in the final count enabling consumer lifestyles to encroach on what had for a moment seemed an ideal testing ground for exploring radical social change in housing and beyond.

- ¹ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.13
- ² E. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, London: Abacus, 2000, p.296-301
- ³ '...local democracy (nærdemokrati) is also a question of attitude. Without the positive will from the Council and civil servants local democracy (nærdemokrati) will not be able to work' Social Democratic electoral advertisement, Oct. 1975, cited in Jeppe Gitz-Johansen, *Beboerarbejde er bl. a. beboernes kamp mod overgreb. Demokratiet i Århus sættes nu til debat*, Århus: Arkitektskolen i Århus, 1976; Indenrigsministeriets arbejdsgruppe, *Kommunalt nærdemokrati*, Cph.: Indenrigsministeriet, 1977; Georg Gottschalk and Jens Tonboe, *Offentlighed, hemmelighed og medindflydelse i planlægningen*, Hørsholm: SBI, 1973
- ⁴ Michael Harloe et al, *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe & America*, London: Blackwell, 1995, op. cit., p. 303
- ⁵ *Montagecirculareret*, the ministry of Housing's circular on system building was sent out in 1960, setting minimum quotas on system built housing. Erik Nygaard, *Tag over hovedet*, Cph.: Arkitektens Forlag, 1984, p.132
- ⁶ Anne Power, *Estates on the Edge*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999; Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial, Vision and Reality in Planned Housing*, Hilary Shipman Ltd., 1990
- ⁷ Boligforeningen Vesterbo, *Forhandlingsprotokol* (Committee minutes) 07.01.57
- ⁸ Erhvervsarkivet, Århus Kommunes Arkiv, Journal Nr. 1504-1961, draft policy statement designed by FO (Fællesorganisation af Danske Boligselskaber)
- ⁹ *Demokraten*, 09.02.62
- ¹⁰ During the early 1960s the Ministry of Housing encouraged the construction of system built flats through special regulations (the *montagecircularere*), while housing associations developed flexible flats that might respond to this demand. This was the case with the Sydjylland Plan – see the previous chapter – that was developed and modified by housing associations in Jutland. Marius Kjeldsen, architect and ministerial spokesman, promoted system building in the housing association press and in separate publications. Boligen covered technical issues appearing in ministerial regulations and large scale system built housing projects featured regularly to underpin the progressive message, see e.g. Marius Kjeldsen, *Fantasi, industri og 100.000 boliger*, *Boligen*, 1966, p.212-221; MODUL - et nyt værktøj i en ny situation (The MODULE – a new tool in a new situation), *Boligen* 1964, p.211-217 Marius Kjeldsen, *Halvtredsernes byggeri*, Cph.: Teknisk Forlag, 1961; Marius Kjeldsen, *Industrialized Housing in Denmark 1965-76*, Cph.: Danish Building Centre, 1976
- ¹¹ *Demokraten*, 18.01.62, *Århus Stiftstidende*, 21.08.66
- ¹² Erhvervsarkivet, Århus Kommunes Arkiv, Journal nr. 1504-1961, letters from Contact to Århus Council, 13.02.73, 03.04.75.
- ¹³ op. cit., letter from Århus Magistrat 22.06.76.
- ¹⁴ Critical comments appeared in the national press on the lack of influence by residents, quoted in *Sagt om os i den offentlige verden*, *Boligen*, 1958, p.53-54; N.a., *Beboerrepræsentation*, *Boligen*, 1961-1962, p.185; *Vesterbos Medlemsblad*, Nov. 1964, nr.11; J. Madsen, *Lejerforeninger – beboerrepræsentanter -----eller beboeradministration?* *Boligen*, 1966, p.474-475
- ¹⁵ As early as the mid-1950s one housing association in Århus was aware of the need to encourage a participatory outlook in its residents. *Vesterbo Medlemsblad*, 1953, 2
- ¹⁶ M. Harloe et al, *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ For detailed histories see the celebratory anniversary publications of: Boligforeningen *Ringgaarden – en almennyttig boligforening 1938 – 50 – 1988*, Århus: Ringgaarden, 1988; *Vesterbo, 1946-1996*, Århus: Vesterbo, 1996; *Andelsboligforeningen Det Sociale Boligbyggeri for Århus og Omegn*, Århus: Det social Boligbyggeri, 1982; *Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening, Jubilæumsskrift, 75 års jubilæum 1919-1994*, Århus: AAB, 1994.
- ¹⁸ Børge Høilund, *Boligloven. Boligbyggeriets tilrettelæggelse og finansiering*, Cph.: J.H. Schultz Forlag, 1960, p.264-271
- ¹⁹ Børge Høilund, *Beboerdemokrati i praksis - en håndbog om boliglovgivningens regler*, Cph.: KAB, 1971; Børge Høilund, *Boligselskaber og Beboerdemokrati*, Cph.: KAB, 1981 - these

publications were handbooks on the practice of residents' democracy, they laid out the fundamental guidelines of good practice, explained about the general running and management of housing associations, and were in general detailed outlines on the etiquette for chairing at meetings. Details were also given for 'normalvedtægterne' (the normal rules) regarding housing associations, which were the basic standard rules pertaining to the management of associations as provided by the NFDHA.

²⁰ A. Power, *Hovels to High Rise, State housing in Europe since 1870*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.282; O. Lind and J. Møller, *Boligfolk, folkebolig. Politik og praksis i boligbevægelsens historie*, Cph.: Boligselskabernes Landsforening, 1994, p. 178-180; *Beboerbladet Boligen*, 1970, p.22-23

²¹ This is considered by Uffe Østergaard's writings and is the background to S. Borish's notion of a developed Danish democracy. Uffe Østergaard, *Europas ansigter*, Cph.: Munksgaard-Rosinante, 1992, Palle Ove Christiansen and Uffe Østergaard, *Folket, landet og nationen*, in Uffe Østergaard, (ed.), *Dansk identitet?*, Århus Universitetsforlag, 1992, p.38-40; Steven M. Borish, *The Land of the Living: The Danish Folk High Schools and Denmark's non-Violent Path to Modernization*, Nevada City: Blue Dolphin Publishing Incorp., 1991

²² Lotte Jensen, *Demokratiforestillinger i den almennyttige boligsektor*, Cph.: University of Copenhagen, Inst. of Political Science, 1997, made a comprehensive study of the various belief and value systems in specific housing associations, concluding that democratic cultures develop in each association that mark particular types of agency and roles for participants: the 'Fatalist' resident is commonly the newcomer, who feels little attachment to the resident democratic system.

²³ *Boligen* regularly featured articles on *beboerdemokrati*; providing explanations on its principles and practices, e.g. Valgt til boligforeningens repræsentantskab – og hvad så?, *Boligen*, 1971, p. 132-133, Beboerdemokratiet har givet en bred kontakflade, *Boligen*, 1972, p.39-40. See also the publications by Børge Høilund, note 19.

²⁴ Lotte Jensen, *ibid.*

²⁵ Leif Hjernø, Kronik: Kulturel bolignød i Århus, *Århus Stiftstidende* 19.02.1971

²⁶ Ole Kvist and Bent Fjord, *Beboeraktivitet og beboerdemokrati - en undersøgelse blandt beboerne på Tovesvej, et nyere almentnyttigt byggeri i Brabrand*, Århus: typed manuscript, 1978

²⁷ *ibid.* p.27

²⁸ In the 1960s in Denmark as a whole the total number of parish and town councils was between 1300-1400. After the local authority mergers there were only 277. The Ministry of the Interior noticed that discussions on local democratic participation was not purely a Danish phenomenon, but was present in most industrialised nations. Indenrigsministeriets arbejdsgruppe, *op. cit.* p.6

²⁹ Jens V. Svendsen, *Dansk boligpolitik og krisen*, Århus: Modtryk, 1977, p.104-105.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ For the history of the 1966 compromise see G. Esping-Andersen, *Politics against Markets*, Princeton University Press, 1985, p.179-186

³² The housing movement was a keen observer of development of housing for young people, see e.g. Herluf Lumbye, Samfundet taber formuer på dårlige boligforhold for unge, *Boligen*, 1969, p.114-119; on developments in the suburbs of Århus; Kollegieliv er en tvungen storfamilie, *Beboerbladet Boligen*, 1970, p.3-6; Birgitte Møller, Ungdommens krav til fremtidens boliger, *Boligen*, 1970, p.41-44; Leif Nielsen, Kollegier er ingen dårlig boligform, *Boligen*, 1971, p.8-11 listed several halls of residents being erected around the city by housing associations such as Gellerup-kollegiet, Ravnsbjerg Kollegiet, Rundhøjkollegiet; Skjoldhøjkollegiet, *Boligen*, 1971, p.12-15

³³ Ib Gejl, *1970'erne*, Århus Årbog, 1981, p. 56

³⁴ Protest publications quickly responded to private modernisation schemes in older housing areas, where renting seemed to symbolise the greater liberalisation of the Danish housing market. Sjællandsgade-kvarterets Beboerforening, *Ejeren vil sælge – vi lejer*, Århus: Sjællandsgade-kvarterets Beboerforening, 1978

³⁵ B.Boer, *Erfaringer fra beboerbevægelsen i Århus. En håndbog i beboerarbejde*, Århus: DS Forlag, 1979, p.31-61

³⁶ The problem of the role of the architect in society became a semester long course at the recently opened Architect School in Århus (opened 1965), *Arkitektens rolle i samfundet*, Arkitektskolen i

Århus, Autumn, 1968. For texts written by student architects see for example Jeppe Gitz-Johansen, *ibid.*; B. Boer, *Erfaringer fra beboerbevægelsen i Århus. En håndbog i beboerarbejde*, Århus: DSF Forlag, 1979; Erik Nygaard, *Arkitekturens politik og drømmen om en frigørende arkitektur*, Århus: private publ., 1977 (dissertation, 1973, School of Architecture, Århus), p.35-48

³⁷ For examples of the methods and objectives of the residents' movement see Ole Bidsted, *Beboerbevægelsen mål og midler*, Cph.: Forlaget Beboertryk, 1978

³⁸ Villy og Viola Vest, *Huslejeboykotten i Vejlbj Vest. Erfaringer fra 14 måneders aktion*, Århus: forlaget Ny og Næ, n.d.

³⁹ *op. cit.* p.85

⁴⁰ Later in the 1970s feminist architects, sociologists and housing researchers considered the state of housing as a framework for living in a patriarchal society, see the conference proceedings by Nynne Koch (ed.), *Boligrammer menneskeverd – en kvinderapport*, Cph.: Branner og Korch, 1978

⁴¹ Historisk Værksted, *Kend din by, din rod*, Århus: Modtryk, 1983, p.45

⁴² Århus Årbog, 1975, p. 154-160

⁴³ Ib Gejl, *Parti og by*, Århus: Social Demokratiet, 1983, p.73-75

⁴⁴ This is at least what Christiansen alludes to when he suggests that grassroots organisations made demands that could no longer be ignored. Politicians at least partially took into account the politicisation of everyday issues and the demands for more say that were challenging previously held democratic values. Niels Finn Christiansen, Denmark: End of the Idyll, *New Left Review*, 1984 (144), p.19 The Social Democratic party had not been immune to leftist critiques of the 1960s youth movements, and these internal challenges have been discussed by Klaus Petersen in his *Socialdemokratisk Samfund. De loyales ungdomsoprør*, Cph.: Selskabet til Forskning i Arbejderbevægelsens historie, 2001

⁴⁵ Many examples can be found in the different neighbourhood newsletters see e.g. *Annas Røst, Teglstenen, Os på Trøjborg, Beboeravisen, Kvarteret*

⁴⁶ ÅS 13.06.72

⁴⁷ *Information*, Sept. 1977, special issue on living conditions in Denmark

⁴⁸ B. Boer, *Erfaringer fra beboerbevægelsen i Århus*, Århus: DSF Forlag, 1979, p.87-88 – this publication outlined the history of local tenants' associations, their activities and the benefits of newsletters: the area's self-identity would be bolstered by such writings listing local events.

⁴⁹ The residents' magazine *Os på Trøjborg* observed angrily that the Mayor of Århus had expressed dissatisfaction with the group's level of activity. This was in the context of much protest activity around the projected building of a shopping centre in the area. *Os på Trøjborg* no. 7, 1976

⁵⁰ The interest group, *Samvirke*, was established in 1976, to frame the discourse of the residents' groups when meeting the local authority. *Beboeravisen*, 1976, p.82-92

⁵¹ Den Sociale Højskole i Århus, *Rapport omforsøgsprojektet i Brammersgade. Lokalkontoret. Social og Sundhedsforvaltningen i Århus*, Århus: Den Sociale Højskole, 1974

⁵² *op. cit.* p.49-50

⁵³ Ole F. Hermansen, *Socialt arbejde i de lokale fællesskaber*, Cph.: Munksgaard, 1985 (1975) considered the Brammergade project to be an example of a community development project in the spirit of the British CDP

⁵⁴ *op. cit.* p.34

⁵⁵ *op. cit.* p. 10 and p.30

⁵⁶ *Århus Stiftstidende*, 03.12.1977

⁵⁷ S. Merrett, *State Housing in Britain*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p. 115-119;

J. Short, *The Post-War Experience: Housing in Britain*, Methuen & Co, 1982, p.59-61; P. Malpass and A. Urie, *Housing Policy and Practice*, London: MacMillan, 1990, p. 68

⁵⁸ Wilfred Burns, *Social Plan*, Newcastle: City Planning Office, 1964

⁵⁹ Judy Hillman, Stopping the rot, *The Guardian*, 15.01.76

⁶⁰ P. Malpass and A. Murie, *ibid.*

⁶¹ MD/NC/106/22 14.10.71 Report of City Planning Officer on GIAs no. 6 and 7, Benwell Dene and Scotswood Estates

⁶² The potential problems of the Skeffington Report were discussed by Norman Dennis, *Public Participation and Planners' Blight*, London: Faber & Faber, 1972, ch.17 and Jens Tonboe and

Georg Gottschalk, op. cit., p.102-103, in a chapter entitled 'English conditions' (relating to planning and participation in Britain).

⁶³ F. Robinson, Industrial Structure, in Fred Robinson (ed.), *Post-Industrial Tyneside*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle upon Tyne City and Libraries and Arts, 1988, p.14-21

⁶⁴ Arthur's Hill GIA, *GIA News*, Newcastle: Newcastle City Council, n.d. At North Benwell GIA residents were shown a film, 'Streets Ahead' distributed by the Department of the Environment, while an exhibition showed the problems in the area and potential improvements to be made by for example traffic regulation. MD/NC/196/25 06.09.73

⁶⁵ For a detailed description of the urban renewal process in Arthur's Hill see Susanne Palsig Christiansen, *Housing and Improvement. A comparative Study, Britain and Denmark*, unpublished Ph.D., York: University of York, 1985

⁶⁶ *Evening Chronicle* 14.05.75; The Planning Department had found that 31 % of residents wanted to be re-housed near their old homes, although it later dropped to only 25 %. *Evening Chronicle* 15.05.75

⁶⁷ S.J. Cameron, Landlords in Housing Action Areas, *Housing Review*, Nov.-Dec., 1978

⁶⁸ P. Malpass and A. Murie, op. cit., p.268

⁶⁹ MD/NC/111 28.11.73 Deputy Director of Housing: report of the new policy to be implemented through the Housing Committee.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ S.J. Cameron, op. cit., p.145

⁷² *Evening Chronicle*, 12.10.81; *The Journal*, 03.05.83

⁷³ MD/NC/115/18 05.04.77, Housing Management Committee, report by the Homeless Joint Sub-Committee. Families received support from a variety of agencies: received support from a variety of agencies: relatives, the DHSS, Hospital Social Workers, Ward Councillors, the Women's Voluntary Service, the Salvation Army, area housing offices and the Social Services Department

⁷⁴ MD/NC115/14 Director of Housing, report to Homeless Joint Sub-Committee 05.04.77

⁷⁵ This critique came from the *Architectural Review*, in a special issue on local government and its services. Radical Restructuring, *Architectural Review*, July 1970 (148), p. 185

⁷⁶ Wilfred Burns, *Towards a New Housing policy – the Planning Base*, Newcastle: City and County of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1962; Town Planning Committee, Development Plan Sub-Committee, *An Investigation into Residential Densities*, Report of the City Planning Officer, Newcastle upon Tyne, July 1962; Wilfred Burns, *Development Plan Review*, City and County of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1963; *Civic News*.

The level of accessible information continued to be low and informal throughout the 1960s even when a professed statement had been made to consult with local communities see Richard Batley, Byker. *A Study of Communication between Planners and the Public in an Area affected by Slum Clearance*, Durham: University of Durham, unpublished MA thesis, 1971

⁷⁷ Jon Gower Davies, *The Evangelistic Bureaucrat*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1972, p.89-133; Richard Batley *ibid.*

⁷⁸ P. Malpass, Professionalism and the role of architects in local authority housing, *RIBA Journal*, June, 1975, p.26.

⁷⁹ P. Malpass, (1975), op. cit., p.81

⁸⁰ MD/NC/106/23 07.09.72, Director of Housing, report to Housing Committee

⁸¹ MD/NC/106/23 *ibid.*, *The Journal*, 07.08.72

⁸² MD/NC/106/22 04.11.71, Director of Housing, report

⁸³ NCCM 01.05.68

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁸⁵ *The Journal*, 10.06.70; 01.12.70

⁸⁶ See *Evening Chronicle*, 24.06.74, 04.07.74; *The Journal*, 27.06.74

⁸⁷ *Evening Chronicle*, 21.06.73

⁸⁸ MD/NC/115/10 15.09.71, Director of Housing, report.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* When asked about structural repairs of the Council's housing stock the Director of Housing still thought that 'somebody' must be responsible for the condition of council housing.

- ⁹⁰ The *Community Action* magazine was a nation wide vehicle for disseminating information on the activities of resident initiated community activities and providing suggestions such as creating communicative strategies when facing local authorities and how to manage meetings.
- ⁹¹ Graham Towers, *Building Democracy. Community architecture in the inner cities*, London: UCL Press, 1995, p.xv
- ⁹² Chris Miller, Area Management: Newcastle's Priority Areas Programme, in Leo Smith and David Jones (eds.), *Deprivation, Participation and Community Action*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, p.109
- ⁹³ MD/NC/115/10 21.07.71, Director of Housing to the Housing Management Working Group; *Evening Chronicle*, 23.07.71
- ⁹⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁹⁵ *Evening Chronicle*, 14.09.72
- ⁹⁶ David Green, *Power and Party in an English City. An Account of Single Party Rule*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981
- ⁹⁷ M. Loney, *op. cit.*, p. 37-53
- ⁹⁸ BCDP, *Slums on the Drawing Board*, Newcastle: BCDP, 1978a, p. 10-11
- ⁹⁹ National CDP, *Forward Plan 1975-76*, London: NCDP, 1976; The specific details on the pathologising of the 'problem family' group by Newcastle City's Director of Housing and the Medical Officer of Health was suggested by Lorna C. Goldsmith, The Problem of the 'Problem Family': Housing Management in Newcastle, paper given at the conference 'Meeting the "Other"', Charles University Prague
- ¹⁰⁰ BCDP (1978a), *ibid.*
- ¹⁰¹ The pressure placed on the Council to deal with the area by the Noble News Group can be traced throughout the Housing Committee minutes, MD/NC/106/28, 21.01.75
- ¹⁰² MD/NC/106/28, Housing Committee minutes: BCDP Project Management Committee 21.01.75
- ¹⁰³ *ROOF* January, 1979
- ¹⁰⁴ MD/NC/106/25 18.09.73 Report by the City Legal Advisor to the Housing Committee
- ¹⁰⁵ BCDP Project Management Committee 21.01.75, in Housing Committee minutes MD/NC/106/28
- ¹⁰⁶ Cohen Committee, *Housing Associations. A Working Paper of the Central Housing Advisory Committee*, London: HMSO, 1971
- ¹⁰⁷ Peter Malpass, *Housing Associations and Housing Policy. A Historical Perspective*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000, p.160
- ¹⁰⁸ P. Malpass (2000), *op. cit.*, 166-168
- ¹⁰⁹ Interview 04.09.02, J.D., former Information Officer for the BCDP
- ¹¹⁰ Martin Loney, *op. cit.*, p.28. This was also the case for the West End Tenants' Association whose *Bulletin* widely challenged local housing and social welfare provision through the rhetoric of class struggle.
- ¹¹¹ Liz Cairncross, David Clapham and Robina Goodlad, The Origins and Activities of Tenant's Associations in Britain, *Urban Studies*, 1992, 29, (5), p.712-718
- ¹¹² The argument that complaint might be a reason for establishing a tenant's association is considered and made relative to the need for social cohesion in housing areas. Liz Cairncross, David Clapham and Robina Goodlad, *ibid.*
- ¹¹³ J.G. Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 127-172
- ¹¹⁴ Norman Dennis, *op. cit.*, p.44-49
- ¹¹⁵ MD/NC/115/8, 19.03.69 Delaval Residents' Association for example asked the HMC for a meeting place. The Director of Housing was forthcoming on the issue, but it was dealt with in an ad hoc manner. Having discussed the issue with the Family Service Unit, which was active in the area, the HMC decided to provide a house in need of modernisation as a suitable meeting place. This did not relieve the problem for the long term, but can be seen as a gesture that would appease the residents in the immediate present.
- ¹¹⁶ An illustrative example is Wythenshaw in Manchester during the 1930s, which was intended to become a root for greater democratisation processes, however it became a single class estate where the ideals of philanthropically inspired leaders clashed with the realities of life on the estate.

Tenants preferred privacy to imposed sociability. Andrzej Olechnowicz, Civic Leadership and Education for Democracy: The Simons and the Wythenshawe Estate, *Contemporary British History*, 2000, 14, (1), p.3-36

¹¹⁷ See for example Newbiggin Hall Tenants' Association, *Tenants' News*, Nov. 1963, March 1966

¹¹⁸ Newbiggin Hall Tenants' Association, *Tenants' News*, March 1964

¹¹⁹ *Tenants' News*, March 1964 - Chair of NHTA, J. McCallum, spoke of this local pride as a reply to Housing Committee member Councillor Cuthbertson's question of why he only heard of complaints.

¹²⁰ Interview Mrs MS, January 2000

¹²¹ The following paragraph draws from the West End Tenants' Association, *Bulletin*, 1967-73

¹²² Heroic individuals were picked out as exemplifying worthy housing action, see for example the story of Lena Hay's personal rent boycott, West End Tenants' Association *Bulletin*, 1973, 17. For a short history of the idea of the tenants' newsletter see Alison Ravetz, Estate Journalism, part of the cultural history of council estates, *Housing Review*, 39 (6), 1990, p.136-137

¹²³ West End Tenants' Association *Bulletin*, July 1968, 6

¹²⁴ *ibid.*

¹²⁵ Georg Gottschalk and Jens Tonboe, *ibid.*

¹²⁶ West End Tenants' Association *Bulletin*, 1968, 6

¹²⁷ For an account of a local Claimants' Group's activities in South Tyneside see http://www.unfinishedrevolution.co.uk/revolution_files?chapters/08_claimants.html

¹²⁸ West End Tenants' Association *Bulletin*, 1972, 13

¹²⁹ Chris Miller op cit., p. 108

¹³⁰ MD/NC/115/18 Director of Housing report to Housing Management Committee

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² *The Journal*, 03.06.69

¹³³ For a contemporary critique of the vision of a fully stable society see Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971. Sennett argues that a mature society is not based on resolving all differences, contradictions and conflicts, particularly not by seeking harmony in the sameness of functionally divided territories such as suburban estates, but on the contrary thrives in an urban sphere which is able to commit itself to discussion and the shared space of a plurality of view points.

¹³⁴ *The Journal*, 08.07.74. Mrs Carol Bennett. A petition had been sent to the Labour M.P. Bob Brown in protest.

¹³⁵ This paragraph is indebted to Newcastle Tenants Federation, *Framework for a Tenants' Charter*, London: Community Project Foundation, 1983

¹³⁶ op. cit., p.5-6

¹³⁷ op. cit., p. 3-4

¹³⁸ *Northern Echo*, 08.09.76; *Evening Chronicle*, 18.04.78

¹³⁹ Newcastle Tenants Federation, op. cit., p.10

¹⁴⁰ It has recently been argued that tenant activism arose out of the consumer movements originating in North America in the 1960s, see Peter Shapely, Tenants arise! Consumerism, tenants and the challenge to council authority in Manchester 1968-92, *Social History*, 2006, 31, (1), p.61-64

¹⁴¹ Transl.:

Da vi stort set er de økonomisk besiddelsesløse, er Samvirkens arbejde tvunget til udelukkende at være af ideologisk og politisk art – for at opnå en indflydelse på det repræsentative system. Kampen for forbedringer i boligkvarterene til gavn for de nuværende beboere må ses som en del af den kamp, der foregår i samfundet mellem de besiddende og de besiddelsesløse. Arbejdet er klart forbundet med denne kamp. beboerbladet for Rosengade Kvarteret, Nov. 1974, 15, n.p.

¹⁴² Contemporary Marxist critiques of the corporative nature of the Danish welfare state (with its keen negotiation and compromise positions between government and the Labour movement) pointed out the weakening of the position of the working class through its 'disorganisation.' State

intervention, and thus local government intervention, was seen as penetrating the realm of social reproduction and negating the force of class struggle. Finn Valentin, Corporatism and the Danish Welfare State, *Acta Sociologica*, 1978 – supplement, p.73-95 – According to such a view the joint forces of the local authority and the social housing associations would be yet another means of delimiting the realm of the working classes. However housing associations and their tenants were only vicariously incorporated into the corporatist machinery - the NFDHA put forward advice as an interest group in the first instance. Søren Villadsen, LOCAL CORPORTISM? The role of organisations and local movements in the local welfare state, *Policy and Politics*, 1986 (14), 2, p.252; also Klaus Petersen, *Legitimität und Krise. Die Geschichte des Dänischen Wohlfahrtsstaates 1945-1973*, Berlin: Verlag Arno Spitz, 1998, p.169-171

¹⁴³ PRO HLG 118/302 and HLG 117/190 North Type Housing Consortium: set up in 1964 with the encouragement of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to improve and rationalise standardised housing construction in the Tyneside region. The construction company contracted to build the 1,400 units required, Dorran Construction Ltd., went into liquidation, after having built housing that very quickly revealed faults and bad resource management. See also M. Glendinning and S. Muthesius, *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1996, p.189-190 – who suggest many such consortia across Britain in the final count produced little housing.

¹⁴⁴ Teglstenen, 1978, 5

¹⁴⁵ Tim Knudsen, *Da demokrati blev til folkestyre. Dansk demokratihistorie I*, Cph.: Akademisk Forlag A/S, 2001, p.162

¹⁴⁶ In the early 1960s the growing number of students was putting pressure on housing in Århus – far the greatest number rented in the private sector: 42.9 % rented a room while only 13.2 % lived in halls of residents at this time – rented rooms were often poor and 25 % of those renting rooms were seeking better accommodation elsewhere. N.a., *Undersøgelse over de Studerendes boligforhold i Århus 1961-62*, Århus: Studenterrådet Århus Universitet, 1962 (p.7, 39). The city also had a number of colleges including a college of social work, a business school, a school of dentistry and was the second city in Denmark after Copenhagen to have a school of architecture. Since seats of university education were relatively restricted in Denmark, student populations in cities such as Århus carried much weight. Furthermore, students on programmes of higher education studied for prolonged periods, sometimes establishing families and/or working alongside their studies. It was not unusual for students to be studying for 5-7 years or more. They consequently had reason to invest in their urban domestic lives.

¹⁴⁷ Some privately run cohabiting communities, or co-housing projects, in Århus have had a lasting presence and show an alternative means to developing co-operative or mutualist communities, see the example of Jerngården cited in Kathryn McCamant, Charles Durrett and Ellen Herzman, *Cohousing. A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*, Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1994, ch. 5 *passim*.

¹⁴⁸ J. Gitz-Johansen, op. cit., p.5-6, West End Tenants' Association, *Bulletin*, 1968, 6, p.1

¹⁴⁹ For an example of a student project see e.g. Per Bjerregaard Clausen, Torben Schmidt, Hans-Ulrik Krogh, *Boligforbedring et gråt boligområde*, Århus: Århus Arkitektskole, Afd. A, 1978; Knud Dynnes Hansen, *Det er ikke nok at bygge boliger*, Århus: Specialopgave, Den Sociale Højskole, 1974; Lis Barnkop et. al., *Centerdannelse. Betydningen af 60- og 70ernes centerdannelse for organiseringen af livssammenhæng – eksemplificeret ved Trøjborgkvarteret og Gellerupparken*, University of Århus, Dept. of Art History, 1979.

Chapter 6

Two locales observed: Gellerupparken and the Byker urban renewal project

Introduction

The thesis until now has adopted a comparative case study approach at the level of the city. Entering into the history of social housing in Århus and Newcastle has facilitated a broad view of the implications of housing policy, of urban planning, of activities connected with the negotiation of space and the promotion of housing that has affected the meaning of social housing provision in the two cities. The thesis asserts that the existence of social housing associations in Århus was a central cultural factor that facilitated the divergences between the politics of social housing provision in Newcastle and Århus. This chapter will shift its perspective to the smaller locale, to housing estates that may be said to carry the 'force of examples.'¹ They represent cases where the themes discussed in earlier chapters can be examined in their relational context. The Byker housing area in Newcastle and Gellerupplanen (later Gellerupparken) on the outskirts of Århus will in this chapter become the empirical focus points around which spatial issues of design and layout, of territoriality and its relation to the social processes arising within the estates and between the residents of the estates, in their relation to wider municipal interests can be studied. It will become clear that the mediating role of what was to become Denmark's largest housing association has a bearing on a housing culture that contrasted with Newcastle's council housing system. Yet the role of a heavily centralist management structure in social housing provision also hints at similarities or equivalences in the problems of enabling active citizenship and real participatory political culture.

While the previous chapters each considered an aspect of social housing provision in Århus and Newcastle this chapter looks at the synthesis of housing policies in two areas. A close study of housing estates may be useful studies in themselves, but in a sense also provides an 'experimental' means of looking at social housing practices as they functioned overall. Why have these particular estates been chosen: are they in any way representative of local activities, and if so what are they representative of? If they are not representative estates of the cities in particular, what role can they play in the present thesis? The contention for the comparison here is that Gellerupplanen and the Byker Wall are both representative cases of wider cultural paradigms in social housing, but are specific cases within Århus and Newcastle. They were places where local people faced specific

historical and local urban questions that arose from their experiences as tenants in social housing systems. In many ways the two estates are very different. Gellerupplanen was built according to the Fordist criteria of the Internal Modern style, with its, for some commentators, overtones of brutish neglect of the social dimension - a typical 'estate on the edge.' In the case of Gellerupplanen the initial design phase quickly became subject to a concern for the community development potential of new residents moving to a new housing area.² On the other hand the Byker Wall is famously perceived to be an exemplar of post-modernism, a symbol of 'community architecture' that involved a degree of participation by established working class residents in the design of the housing scheme through the vehicle of an internationally renowned architect. Indeed, it has been described as an early type of 'flagship development' for a municipality facing the challenges of urban decline.³ In both Århus and Newcastle the estates are unique and singular, embedded deeply in the historical contingencies of the two cities.

But both Gellerupplanen and Byker Wall are also paradigmatic cases in terms of their spatial and environmental representation, as well as in the processes of community building that were embedded there. They may be specific cases in the history of social housing in the two cities, but they embody aspects of residents' democracy in Danish social housing associations (*beboerdemokrati*), and reflect British community action aiming at establishing participatory democracy. Gellerupparken and the Byker project were both examples of the utopian inheritance that formed the basis for the housing projects. It is the study of the challenge to that utopian promise that will be studied in the following. This social dynamic is embedded in the tissue of the physical environment that constitutes the estates.

20th century developments in an Århusian suburb: Brabrand-Aarslev and Gellerupplanen

In one sense there is little in Gellerupplanen that marks it as a uniquely Århusian housing estate. As a Modernist estate on the edge of the city near the small town of Brabrand it has suffered the plight of increasing social exclusion in recent decades, especially of immigrant ethnic groups. It is in this regard typical of other European suburban, ghettoized estates.⁴ But its social and administrative features are particularly Danish, and its planners did not foresee the social problems of the estate that had implications for later social housing policy. Only as the planning of the project proceeded through the 1960s did

the notion of pre-empting the social barren-ness of high rise estates - predicted in the warning cries by sociologists - become ever more compelling. This critique was an international phenomenon that was to reflect changes in the architectural discourses that were affected by new ways of thinking in sociology. They arose partly as changes in the economic conditions of the West experienced greater suburbanisation, and the growing polarisation of social groups.⁵ It is to the history of the planning of the social and physical territory of this locale that we now turn.

Brabrand-Aarslev parish Council was until the mid-1950s a small rural authority, lying to the west of Århus. The railway ran through the village from 1862 and it for a time became a resort for the middle classes of Århus. The population of the area was small and grew only slowly: in 1901 the population was 1,477, in 1921 1,682, and by 1940 it had risen to 2,136.⁶ But after 1950 its growth was felt more forcefully, compelled by the collaborative developments between the parish Council and the newly established housing association, Brabrand Boligforening (est. 1948). With the pressures of acute housing need in neighbouring Århus and its suburbs, the local parish Council saw an opportunity to expand in line with the general regional developments discussed in chapter 3. The suburb was soon to become an overspill area for workers in Århus, while smaller industrial companies, encouraged by the parish Council set up businesses locally as the labour force expanded with the area's housing developments.

The local parish council managed its area's urbanizing process with an eye on supporting organizations such as housing associations. Brabrand-Aarslev Council was small, only employing staff from 1921, when it appointed its first bookkeeper, it grew to 5 staff during the war, which by 1961 had grown to 13. Bureaucratic procedures were relatively simple in such a small local authority, and Parish Council members were personally involved in the day to day running of the Council's procedures.⁷ This personal engagement with the social life of the authority included close collaboration with Brabrand Boligforening. Throughout the post-war decades representatives of the local authority shared aspect of Committee work with Brabrand Boligforening's Committee, and were always present at the traditional *rejsegilde* ceremonies that marked highlight in the association's building progress.

The early history of Brabrand Boligforening follows the conventional trajectories of a small Danish general needs housing association. It complied with state housing policy, and was dependent on local authority agreements on subsidy levels and loan guarantees, as social housing became subject to the increased liberalisation of the Danish housing market. Apart from early reservations by the social democratic Council, who feared that large social housing complexes would come to dominate the small authority in 1950, Brabrand Boligforening held a virtual monopoly on the provision of social housing in the area throughout the last half of the twentieth century.⁸ It planned modern housing areas based on an expansionist model that accommodated itself to contemporary housing policy. In retrospect the Chair and Director of the association suggested that Brabrand Boligforening Committee ran the association according to 'business principles.'⁹ It will be shown below how these principles were later to become subject to contention and criticism. Yet, while the association's housing schemes were small-scale, and the Danish welfare state was expanding during the 1950s and 1960s, the housing association was successful in its provisions. Its housing stock was designed and built to high specifications, making a visible imprint on the previously rural landscape.

Brabrand Boligforening's housing projects

Like other Danish housing associations Brabrand Boligforening worked intimately with a single architectural practice. The architect Knud Blach Petersen was involved with all the association's projects from 1949, and his practice continued to work intimately with the association, receiving much critical attention for Gellerupplanen in the 1970s. Moreover, to assist in the project planning and implementation stages the association Committee also used the services of Arbejderbo, a Copenhagen based project management organisation established by co-operative construction companies and architectural agencies, which provided nation-wide support for new housing projects.¹⁰ In the early years after the Second World War social housing developments were designed by Brabrand Boligforening for the parish Council, although few efforts were made to plan the area as a whole for some years to come. Housing estates such as Søvangen (485 flats and houses) and Hans Broges Parken were regarded as high quality park estates, sensitively located in a landscaped area inclining towards the Brabrand Lake, with kindergartens, standard collective laundry facilities and meticulous estate maintenance funded by rent payments (Fig. 6.1).¹¹



Fig. 6.1 The Søvangen housing area by Brabrand Boligforening, 1953-1959. Lokalthistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker.

During the late 1950s the Brabrand Boligforening Committee, its architect and Arbejderbo's technical department, together with the local authority engineer set out the plan that was to become the foundation for the association's housing projects for the following decades. The master plan divided the development into three sections: one in each of the two villages, Gellerup and Brabrand, the third covering surrounding agricultural areas, predicated on a growth rate of approximately 100 housing units a year. Gellerup lay near an arterial road leading into Århus, the Silkeborg Landevej, 5 km from the city centre. Much was made of the need to provide welfare amenities: child care institutions and libraries were to be included, leading to designs for complete town areas (*bymæssige bebyggelser*). But the Council was equally concerned to preserve the natural sites around Brabrand Lake.¹² And with this in mind the 'great town plan' was officially authorised by the Ministry of housing in 1961 (Fig. 6.2).¹³

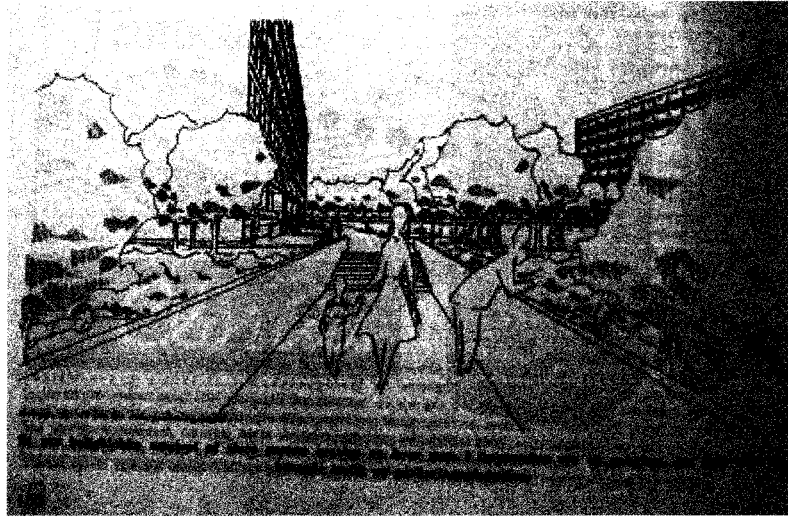


Fig. 6.2 Rendition of the Gellerupplan as it was initially presented in the housing association publication, *Boligen*, 1964, p.152. The caption reads: A couple of blocks of flats surrounded by green areas and where one sees in the foreground a pedestrian walk-way which leads across traffic and the car parks.'

The plan formed the basis for constructing a model housing project on a *tabula rasa* of arable land (Fig. 6.3) The first stage was the construction of Skovgårdsparken in 1959, a housing area shared between the Århusian housing association, Arbejdernes Andelsboligforening (AAB) and Brabrand Boligforening. In the wake of this project the subsequent history of Gellerupplanen at first read as a story of a successfully planned, modern urban development that would complement the growing Danish welfare state.¹⁴ Gellerupplanen, as its name implies, was a design fresh off the planner's table, arising from visions of the new, the better, and the utopian; free from the material contingencies of the past, but built for a demanding and aspirational future population. Its place-ness and social life would need to be invented and its creation founded on experiences gathered elsewhere, internationally and nationally.



Fig. 6.3 Sections of Brabrand Boligforening's housing developments, early 1970s: in the foreground on the right are the completed Søvangen flats lying to the south of the main road into Århus. The central structure under construction is the shopping centre, Storcenter Nord, with Sect. IV of the Gellerupplan extending behind. Lokalthistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker.

To enable international Modernism its fullest potential at Gellerupplanen its architecture was anchored in an implicit comparative dimension through visits to new developments in European cities. Selected members of Brabrand Boligforening Committee - the Chairman, the Business Manager, the architect or a senior assistant, accompanied by their spouses - explored contemporary modern architectural and new town developments across Europe throughout the 1960s. Some visits seem to have been mainly tourist trips, but the study visit to Britain in 1965 was clearly motivated by an educational intention. Major development sites were visited: Stevenage New Town, Welwyn Garden City, Hampstead and the large housing projects constructed by London County Council - the Roehampton and the Alton estates were surveyed, while the group enjoyed a tour of the LCC architect's office.¹⁵ Two years later the Committee members visited Cumbernauld New Town and Cumbernauld Development Corporation's Office, Sheffield's Park Hill Estate, Skelmersdale New Town and Leicester University to study the new Engineering Building, concluding with a brief leisure visit to the Lake District.¹⁶ With the expansion of

Gellerupplanen in progress, a second trip to Berlin in 1969 now focused on major architectural projects that reflected the later shifts in focus by the Brabrand Boligforening Committee: multi-functional shopping centres such as the Zentrum am Zoo and the Europa Center in Berlin were of interest, while the housing area of Märkische Viertel-Zentrum was noted for its mixture of dwelling types and welfare amenities.¹⁷ The study visits reflected the eagerness with which the leaders of the Committee and its architects sought to affirm, at least to themselves, the potential of the Gellerup project. The material reality of housing estates in other countries legitimised the utopian plans for these master builders of Danish welfare state housing. But in the wake of such splendidly exclusive visits abroad, and with the first phase of Gellerupplanen almost complete the justification for travel appeared less apparent. It will be described later how plans for a trip to Japan was to raise important questions about the relationship in decision making processes between the association's management and residents, that was the first hint of crises to come.

In this way the architectural ideas for the area were founded on the International Modernist style gained through study visits and professional insight. Roots for the design could be found in British, North American, Dutch, Swedish and Finnish housing estates.¹⁸ Early descriptions of Gellerupplanen to hit the front pages of the local press described it as a new town, giving credit to the foresight of Brabrand Boligforening in providing flats with an up-to-date design that would be creditable for the next 50-100 years.¹⁹ Gellerupplanen was to be a model town, built using non-traditional methods at a rate of 400 units a year, aimed at housing 10,000 people within 7 or 8 years. This contrasted with the speed of traditional bricklaying techniques that would have resulted in a much slower development at 15- 20 years.²⁰ The impetus to convert to non-traditional industrialised building methods on a modular pattern came from the government's desire to boost social housing construction.²¹

While the estate embodied the modern utopian ideas of a mass-produced housing system so the traditional festivity of the *rejsegilde* was also rationalized, incorporating celebrations of 9 housing structures in one party. What had in the past been a small scale event for groups of labourers, located under the roof trusses of a building, was now to encompass a large party for 2-300 contractors and their workmen removed to a local hotel.²² One newspaper was outraged by this break with tradition and thought it too lavish

and expensive a ceremony. But the event was defended in statements suggesting that the forces of modernity compelled rituals to change. Nevertheless a *rejsegilde* was still a cultural expectation to mark a milestone in an association's progress.²³ If no acknowledgement of their work was made builders might take revenge by 'hanging a dead bricklayer' on the top of a building (Fig. 6.4).²⁴ And maybe it was in the housing association's interest to continue such a tradition, where the importance of its newest housing project could be reinforced through displays of solidarity with groups of working men who worked at a distance from Brabrand Boligforening's centralised management.

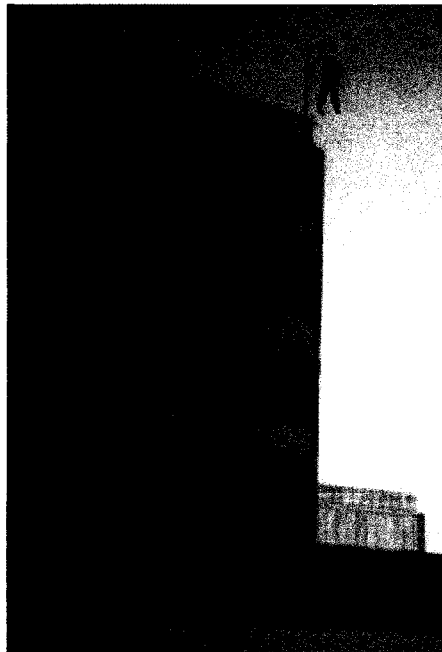


Fig. 6.4 A stuffed figure of a man was 'hung' from roof structures at Gellerupplanen by builders in a case where a roof raising ceremony may not have been held. Brabrand Boligforening's rationalisation of construction and its similar efficiency measures in creating large ceremonies upset the press and may have upset construction workers as they came to terms with a changing tradition, 1970s. Lokalthistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker.

In relation to the region of Greater Århus, the Gellerupplan was to become one of the six C centres described in the 1966 Greater Århus urban plan (see ch. 3). It was suggested that it would no longer be sufficient to only build houses to cover the population growth, accommodation to the car was needed, and attention would need to be paid to the general convenience of residents. Over and above the physical environment provided 'added

value' of comfort and luxury in this new form of social living. To attract residents from the older quarters of Århus, the Gellerupplan was built to high specifications, both spatially and in the use of materials. Flats were built in blocks of 4 and 8 stories, planned to fulfill the County Council's requirement that the views across Brabrand Lake should be exploited to the full.²⁵ Brabrand Boligforening's promotional literature for the new area celebrated the scale and high quality of the new housing provided: Pairs of flats were mostly family sized with 3-4 bedrooms, ranging from c.110 square metres to 120 square metres, while one and a half roomed flats were situated between to house single people. Of special note to the general public was the kitchen design, which, although based on the standardised designs of the Danish Kitchen Unit (Dansk Køkkensæt), had been laid out by the association's architects in collaboration with a special committee including three housewife representatives.²⁶ Cars and pedestrians were separated following the conventions of contemporary urban planning. Space was generously provided for affluent residents with 1.5 cars per dwelling. New town, or extended neighbourhood unit amenities included a school, several nurseries and kindergartens, sports and recreational facilities (including a projected sledging hill and a swimming pool).

Furthermore it was hoped that local identity and a sense of place could be anchored in the history of Gellerup. During the early 1960s Brabrand Boligforening had been acquiring farmland in expectation of the association's expansion, buying the Sophiesminde, Tøushøj, Holmstrup and Gellerup farms that were to give their names to the various sections of the Gellerupplan. But modernity paradoxically disrupted this legacy: A major shopping development and cultural centre were the celebrated focal features that would anchor the area's identity in the consciousness of the local community (Fig. 6.5 and 6.6). A library, theatre, hotel, bars and a church fed the cultural needs of the population. The shopping centre, with its piazzas and diversity of retail outlets was linked to the cultural centre by a pedestrian bridge, leading to a central walkway running through the area. The centre was placed immediately north of the Silkeborg Landevej and would also service Brabrand Boligforening's earlier housing sections that lay to the south of the area. The shared pool of international reference points in architecture and planning was deployed as universal criteria to make this welfare community manifest. Local focal points were intended to be derived from social and cultural activities arising in the areas. Brabrand Boligforening set out to build the basis for community activities as the new town area was taking shape.



Fig. 6.5 Interior shot of the Storcenter Nord shopping centre at Gellerupplanen. *Arkitektur*, 1974, (18), p.307



Fig. 6.6 View from within Gellerupplanen seen from an exit of the Storcenter Nord shopping centre. The signs point to clubs and leisure facilities in the area, including a hotel and a theatre. Lokalthistorisk Samling, Århus Kommunes Biblioteker.

Social aspects of Gellerupplanen

As so many housing authorities before it, Brabrand Boligforening was buoyed up on the expansionist assumptions about improving social life through spatial and environmental design. But Gellerupplanen also embodied the paradoxical situation of mass housing provision planned as a social welfare measure. By the end of the 1960s the social benefits of system built urban housing, were increasingly questioned by sociologists and urbanists.²⁷ Yet while Brabrand Boligforening's Committee was becoming aware of this growing opposition to housing areas such as Gellerupplanen, it was committed to providing large quantities of dwellings for an ideal nuclear family. Research on the family was needed to find a form of domestic architecture adequate to contemporary housing needs, and that would permit the cultivation of young families and youth into useful ('*brugbare*') citizens. The instability and weakening of family life was becoming a concern for sociologists observing an increase in family break-down and the subsequent detrimental effect on children. Architects noted that the family had been a neglected field of study, lagging behind other areas of culture that required closer examination.²⁸

Indeed in responding to the critique of large dehumanizing housing areas Brabrand Boligforening described this as one of its primary roles. The phrase *It is not enough to build Dwellings* ('Det er ikke nok at bygge boliger...') inscribed this added value in its promise, and was employed to legitimise the construction of a new style housing area, stylistically reminiscent of the low rise high density housing ideals of the early 1970s, Holmstrupgård, section 3 of the Gellerupplan.²⁹ One writer considered industrial construction to be building new slums, and suggested instead that it should be deployed for low rise housing with gardens modelled on a traditional Danish provincial town: 'The low-rise, high density and differentiated urban development which is rooted in the Danish provincial town. Houses with gardens or row houses with gardens...'³⁰ And so Brabrand Boligforening described its latest housing design as a valuable area intended for affluent families.

This idea necessarily also became a key promotional device to persuade wealthier working families and the new middling social groups (*funktionærer*), otherwise inclined to move into home-ownership during the late 1960s, that Gellerupplanen would fulfill all their material aspirations for living.³¹ The Chair of the association declared contemporary

housing to be a commodity on par with cars, fridges and television sets.³² Brabrand Boligforening was presented as providing the optimal solution to the problem of choice between private renting and home-ownership: some of its earlier housing projects, including single family houses, could be acquired with a deposit at half the cost of ownership. The solidaristic welfare principles of social housing made this a worthy means of achieving a home - one acquired a house on a collective basis.³³ Amenities evoked the benefits otherwise available through homeownership - individual garden plots provided for selected flats, sports grounds and swimming pool, evoked the need for leisure pursuits sought out by the growing middle level social group. Children would be able to safely play out of doors. One play area was laid out in a pedagogically consistent manner and was managed by trained professionals.³⁴ By 1969 when the Gellerupplan was being heavily promoted in the press, through advertisements and exhibitions, its childcare provisions represented the nurturing qualities of the environment (*miljø*), or could become so, it was suggested, if residents themselves acted positively towards the new possibilities made available to them.³⁵

Following the show home displays of the mid 1960s in Århus (described in chapter 4) the Gellerupplan was promoted through a major exhibition in 1969, supported by the National Federation of Danish Housing Associations. The local free advertiser, *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, published a special issue that was circulated to residents and exhibition visitors. One advert invited readers to visit 'the country's largest' building site.³⁶ The furnished flats on display, the architectural models, photographs and drawings of the area drew a large audience. 5,000 people visited during the first weekend, while the housing association gained 200 new membership subscriptions.³⁷ No doubt the high level of recruitment revealed a popular interest in the new housing area. Membership figures for the housing association may not be conclusive evidence of the positive hopes held for the future of the estate, but from a total of 6,405 members in 1969 during the next four years the housing association saw a growth of more than 60% reaching a membership of 10,671 in 1973, with new annual membership subscriptions extending well over 1,500 some years.³⁸ Whether the audience was fully persuaded by a progressive rhetoric that promised such a good life for themselves and their families is questionable.³⁹ However the improvements in the quality of life in a large family flat set in an open landscape would have made a difference for families arriving from the cramped conditions of the densely built inner areas of Århus.

Building community life at Gellerupparken

The hopes for a sustainable and materially nurturing social life were in this way projected in exhibitions and press. The sociological critique of high-rise estates nevertheless persisted, and could not be ignored by the housing association. Brabrand Boligforening attempted to pre-empt any critique of its housing project by pro-actively encouraging newcomers to involve themselves in the public life of the estate, in clubs and societies. Early on in the life of Gellerupplanen between 20-30 societies had been set up to cater for a variety of activities from sports and hobbies to entertainment, covering all age groups from children and youth to pensioner.⁴⁰ The association attempted to positively foster an added level of civil society beyond its official, governmental structures that was to be handed over to residents themselves, in order to encourage self-governance within the social life of the estate. Various levels of local civil society were in this way inter-related in a web of activities from recreation to housing management.

Many of the associations and clubs were self-consciously aware of their role as community building exercises. The cultivation of community and '*trivsel*' (nurture and well-being) in new housing areas was a national concern, but attained a significant level of meaning in Gellerupplanen.⁴¹ If allotment culture for example was revived in projects such as Gellerupplanen it contributed to a sense of Danishness embedded in local cultural activities. Allotments or gardens laid out between the blocks of flats were described as rooted in a Danish national identity that had been threatened by large construction projects and the general disenchantment of modernity: 'The '*hygge*' [transl. 'cosy-ness and comfort'] of the Danish allotment has always been advanced as a national characteristic, but in recent years '*hygge*' has been suffering.'⁴² Priority of membership to the gardening society was given to pensioners, drawing its funds for gardening tools and prizes from subscription fees. Starting-up funds for societies and childcare projects borrowed from the local housing section committee. The importance of self-initiated groups for the social life of the area was continually stressed at committee meetings and in press reports.⁴³ Another important element was the brewery club set up in a basement room under a block of flats. It was claimed that on the basis of this group alone the number to sign up to live in Gellerupplanen had risen by a third within a few weeks (Fig. 6.7).⁴⁴ Community feeling and the brotherhood of collectively shared interests was apparently a motivating factor.

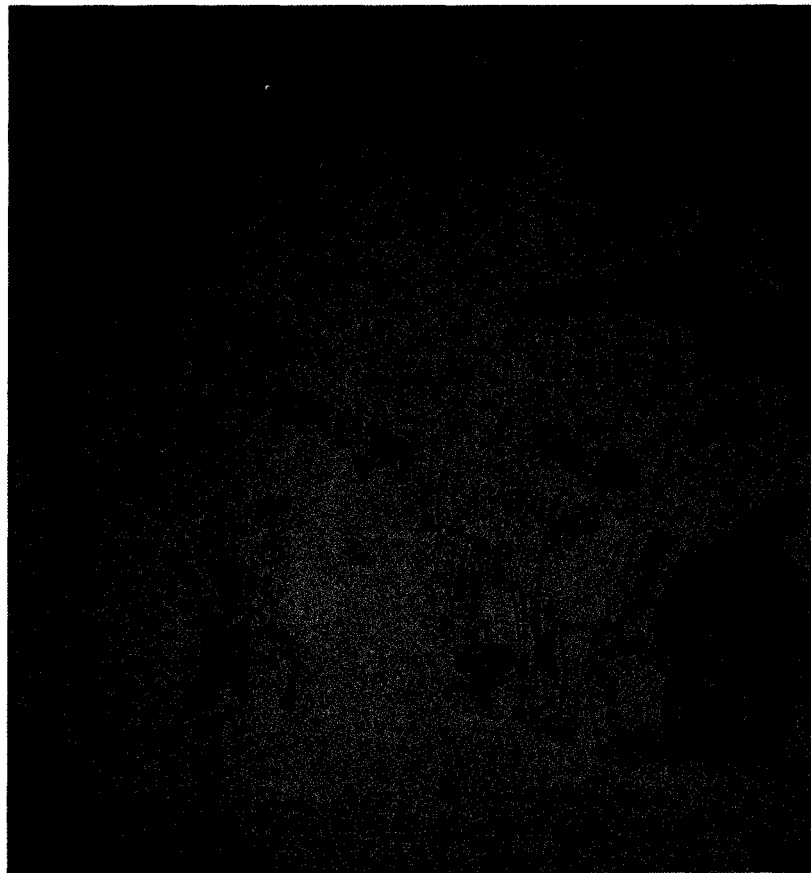


Fig. 6.7 Caricature of the attractions of Gellerupplanen, 1970: The caption reads 'Applications for a flat in the Gellerupplan complex has risen three times since the home brewer Alf Grostøl started his business. *Århus Stiftstidende*, 20.04.70 – Brabrand Boligforening's archive.

A vocal spokesperson for residents' democracy and the power of neighbourhood feeling, who was also Chair of the Representative Committee of the Gellerupplan and later Chair of the Leisure Committee, Knud Dynnes Hansen, wrote keenly on the value of leisure activities for the communal life of the area.⁴⁵ However in 1972 he noted that only few residents were actively engaged in local leisure activities or the local residents' democracy, which was confirmed by a later investigation at Toveshøj (Gellerupplan sect. V – see ch. 5).⁴⁶ Indeed heavily weighted words such as '*trivsel*' (nurture), '*miljø*' (social and physical environment), and '*komme hinanden ved*' ('getting to know each other' - creating local social bonding) were often used in un-defined ways by 'environmental evangelicals' he suggested. Some made the mistake of behaving as 'environmental martyrs' when faced with low attendance figures at residents' meetings. He raised the question of what reasons lay behind the non-attendance of those 80 % - 90 % of people

who stayed away from meetings. How much engagement could people actually expect from each other when making assertions on community bonding? Using Maslow's scale of needs he pointed out that the pre-condition for fostering togetherness was the psychological and physical resources people realistically could call forth in being supportive and proactive neighbours.

An important bridge between those residents who were involved with the procedural structures of *beboerdemokrati* (see chapter 5) and those residents less inclined to participate in local decision-making were the local grass roots media. Just as inner city residents established magazines as vehicles to disseminate their contentions against the council, but also in the tradition of Danish housing associations in general, Brabrand Boligforening established a local residents' magazine, *Skræppebladet* (transl. 'The Chatter Magazine'). From the outset its aim was to facilitate communication within Brabrand Boligforening's larger housing sections. The magazine became the central organ for residents' representatives to promote democratic processes in the area. It contained information on most leisure and social activities in the area, but more importantly provided guidance on how residents' democracy (*beboerdemokrati*) worked, and explained in detail the organisational structure of Brabrand Boligforening. On the other hand it also allowed those voices to speak that had more local neighbourhood issues to contend with such as noise and vandalism by children. During a period of crisis for the association *Skræppebladet* provided crucial commentary and discussion papers on possible solutions to the current problems in the association's management.

Crisis of confidence in the Brabrand Boligforening management

Despite ideals of community building and continuous work to build up local civic life Brabrand Boligforening met economic difficulties and democratic instability as its remit grew. A first hint of crisis within the housing association became clear in 1970 when an inner group of managers of the central Committee planned a study trip to Japan to visit the Expo 70. To some residents this reflected an excessively extravagant tradition that should not remain unchallenged from within the democratic structures of the association. Members of the Brabrand Boligforening Representative Committee (the highest authority of the organisation) protested at the excessive cost of travel, and initially demanded an extraordinary general meeting to castigate the Committee for planning such luxury trips without its knowledge.⁴⁷ The Business Manager of the Association defended the trip,

claiming its local relevance through the study of contemporary Japanese housing developments and modern construction techniques. Yet ultimately the challenge was toned down, becoming a demand for clearer communication between the Representative Committee and the central housing Committee. Requesting that the Committee recognise the over-riding authority of its residents' representatives. A clearer line of communication between the structures of the organisation was required prior to travel, rather than summative reports, to enable forward planning in the association according to democratic principles.

By this time then such a small challenge signaled that all was not well with the association's residents' democracy. In 1959 the overall authority of the association had been delegated to a committee of residents' representatives, the Representative Committee, but during the 1960s appeared to rubberstamp projects already designed and decided upon by the Brabrand Boligforening Committee.⁴⁸ When the first three dimensional model of Gellerupplanen appeared at the annual general meeting of the Association in 1964 the Brabrand Boligforening Committee did not ask members for input into the project's design or its financing, but sought authorization for the project to go ahead.⁴⁹ Under the banner of rational, centralised, business-like growth the Brabrand Boligforening Committee projected its affairs under the auspices of the local authority and the Ministry of Housing. Funds were borrowed according to national housing policy, on the basis of the security in its early projects and the investment purchases of cheap farmland. Its business management ran according to a housing development system it had on the whole been following since its inception in 1948. That this management system was problematic by the early 1970s is not surprising, with the enormous growth in its housing stock and the challenges of a resident population reflecting the changing social constitution of social housing areas.

The Brabrand Boligforening Committee was made up of five members two of whom were residents' representatives. A remarkable continuity existed in the form of the Chair of the Committee and the housing association's Business Manager, both heavily involved in Brabrand Boligforening's expansionist project for 25 years.⁵⁰ As long as the economic life of the association seemed solvent and successful no questions were raised about its running. But by the 1970s calls for increased democratic involvement were increasingly vocal, after residents' democracy became a statutory requirement in social housing

associations. Furthermore, with the demise of high-interest housing projects, of which Gellerupparken was one, cracks appeared in the smooth management of the association's affairs.

In 1974-75 Brabrand Boligforening was to experience a serious financial crisis that caused heated public debates and challenged the control of the association. On the basis of money borrowed from savings made in its older housing sections – funds that were intended for the upkeep and modernisation of these sections – and on the optimistic investment of loans based on the security of the land and property of the association as a whole, the Brabrand Boligforening Committee placed large investments into the construction of local retail and cultural amenities. Following its conventional procedures for large-scale expansion the Committee relied on the local parish Council of Brabrand-Aarslev for a local authority guarantee for these projects. By 1970 however, the much larger Århus Council had responsibility for Brabrand-Aarslev after the local authority merger, and it rejected a request for a guarantee. Moreover, in the wake of the national financial crisis of the early 1970s, with growing interest rates and problems in letting its larger flats, the association faced major financial losses. The buck was passed to the Århus Council, which, although providing no guarantee for the cultural centre, did have a stake in the retail centre, which went into liquidation. A request for the Ministry of Housing to intervene was rejected. In the final count therefore, an over-all solution was sought that ultimately saw the shopping centre sold off to an insurance company at a compulsory sale. The cultural centre was handed over to the lending company that had provided the initial funds, but later became the responsibility of Århus Council. The swimming pool continued to be run as a separate section of the housing association.

For many commentators the case revealed that members of the Brabrand Boligforening central Committee had personal interests in the development of community provisions in the area. Fingers pointed to the Chair, who as Director of a boiler-making factory had provided boilers to heating systems used in the association's housing areas, as well as having a personal stake in the private consortium that had originally owned the shopping centre.⁵¹ The Chair had retired in 1973, but the Business Manager was a continuing presence in the crisis, playing a part in the re-distribution of finances that led to the near bankruptcy of the association. He was sacked by the Representative Committee, ultimately a symbolic gesture, since he was soon employed by the lender, an insurance

company, to manage the shopping centre. Such a crisis indicated that the association had relied on decision-making practices that had not been flexible in the face of changing municipal administration and economic conditions. It could not have predicted the national financial situation that rapidly restricted its investment capacity after the 1973 oil crisis. Putting effort into constructing large scale, high specification flats at a time when families were looking to homeownership, revealed how the association's ideals of social housing as a democratic welfare provision was being challenged by the interests of consumerism and the seeming lack of interest in a solidaristic housing form. In addition, local democracy took a knock as conflicts of interest infiltrated the association's management structures.

The changing constitution of residents at Gellerruparken

As Brabrand Boligforening suffered financial hard-ship both from its internal crisis and as an effect of the high costs of letting expensive flats, it became a 'difficult-to-let' estate. The international oil crisis and its subsequent effects on national economies was felt locally in rising interest rates on loans for construction, experienced in social housing across European countries.⁵² Affluent families who could afford to turned to homeownership, while the large flats at Gellerruparken became vacant. Attempts were made to lower rents by locking off rooms in large flats, and students and communes (*Kollektiver*) were encouraged to flat-share in the larger units, while ultimately the housing association was compelled to sell some its land in 1975 to retrieve losses.⁵³

The social constitution of the social housing at Gellerruparken in the 1970s developed differently from the ideal projections of Brabrand Boligforening's Committee a decade before. Apart from those resident groups who arrived from the old inner city areas, immigrant Turkish families (guest workers) moved in. Although the trickle of minorities might have been slow at first there were 12 % foreigners in Gellerrup by 1980 (most of whom would have been Turkish) compared to an average of 2 % in Århus as a whole (Fig. 6.8).⁵⁴

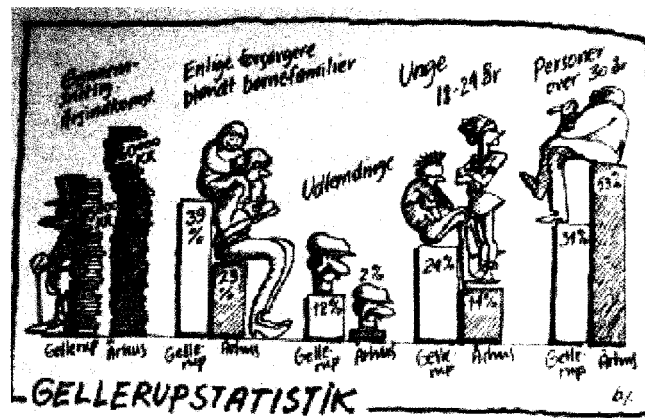


Fig. 6.8 'Gellerupstatistics', an illustration of the social constitution of Gellerupparken in 1983 in comparison with Århus. From Historisk Værksted, *Kend din, by din rod*, Århus: Modtryk, 1983

Other groups showed similar imbalances: 39 % households constituted single parent families (in Århus this figure was 23 %), the population of young people between 18 and 24 was 24 % compared to 14 % in Århus.⁵⁵ Brabrand Boligforening, as Denmark as a whole, had little experience of dealing with ethnic minority groups, nor did it have the capacity to cope with growing complaints of youth crime and vandalism. As the first housing association in Denmark the association therefore appointed a social worker in 1977 to work with residents, as a supplementary service to the social welfare provisions available through the local authority.⁵⁶ Thus from the end of the 1970s it became clear that the social welfare of the housing area was lacking a coherent and continuous point of contact for the residents. The Gellerupparken area became the focus for area based social work processes, seeking to integrate a more coherent social welfare service to the multiple problems arising there.⁵⁷

This shift in residents followed in wake of the area's stigmatisation that was to haunt the Gellerupparken from its early beginnings. Soon after its inception as a modern, high quality housing area the area was described as a slum in the press.⁵⁸ Allegation were made that the architect had publicly labeled residents as 'social cases', and he seemingly regretted having designed the area in a Modernist form.⁵⁹ It is maybe not surprising that such stigma should appear, bearing in mind that the area was built in contradiction to contemporary currencies in sociology and growing popular awareness of the social issues arising in such housing areas. As a counter-weight, local residents worked hard at evoking a sense of

local patriotism and defended their housing as a space that enabled a variety of social life to flourish.⁶⁰

Considerations on the democratic potential of housing associations

What motivated some residents and deterred others from applying themselves to local democracy as 'good citizens'? That crises or difficulties arising from housing management practices provoked assertive reaction from tenants has been a repeated theme of the thesis. Some writers have argued that despite the hopes by Marxist critics that tenants living in social rented accommodation would become aware of collectively shared interests, this has not become manifest. Rather, it has been suggested, tenants to a large extent concern themselves with localised individual matters, rather than being united according to the status of their tenure⁶¹ – with the growth of consumerism the private has become sacred, in turn dis-engaging citizens from the potential of a more radical approach to decision making in their localities. In the light of an apparent lull in the democratic processes that appeared after the acute financial crisis had died down in Gellerupparken, some have sought explanations for the sluggish participation levels in a high degree of resident satisfaction.⁶² Resident democracy, it could be argued, did prove its worth during Brabrand Boligforening's crisis. It became a means to facilitate and accommodate necessary social change in the governance of social housing. During conditions of sound and stable management resident satisfaction inclined residents to shift their interests away from local participation. Although both perspectives are to some extent plausible interpretations there has been very little qualitative or historical research to prove either that the collective model applies universally or that the premises of an individualistic approach provide the full answer. Resident action may have been localised and specific, it might even have been undertaken in the face of an acute compulsion to re-structure an internal power balance, but its effects should not be underestimated, and real achievements were reached.⁶³ What is equally important to note though, was the continuous efforts needed to persuade, goad and teach those less inclined to support a system that might have seemed irrelevant to their experience of everyday life. In the case of Denmark the conclusions drawn from the use of an anthropological model to examine the problems of citizen-withdrawal in social housing areas such as Gellerupparken, during the 1990s might be too recent to apply historically.⁶⁴ However it suggested a socio-cultural interpretation that had its origins in the social marginalisation of residents living in social housing estates on the urban periphery. In cases such as Gellerupparken, which

became increasingly stigmatised areas of socially excluded groups, a tendency towards a fatalistic outlook dominated those resident groups who felt powerless, or had little understanding of culturally specific democratic structures. In the final count the tensions between the institutionalized democratization processes of Brabrand Boligforening and the conceptions of citizenship perceived by different groups, politicians, Committee members, housing movement representatives, residents and their representatives were framed in a way that seemed to inhibit a fully shared decision making.

Byker

In 1974 the respected architectural critic, Reyner Banham, outlined his impression of Newcastle Council's urban renewal project at Byker:

From that exposed corner [of the building] one can enjoy....what must be the most spectacular urban panorama in northern England, a huge sweep across the Tyne and downtown Newcastle. Even by night – even more by night – it's a sight to pin your eyelids up.

Good for ye, gawking visitor; but wha'bout folks int'side, hen? Good question. The sort of accommodation they are getting.... is not startling different from what other council tenants have been getting elsewhere, and owes nothing visibly to Byker traditions or customary preferences. Which is pretty remarkable at face value, because the whole operation has always come on strong about participation. Erskine maintained a storefront.... design office, with an open-door policy, so that everyone could come in and air their views. What happened, as usual, was that this got used as an unofficial Citizen's Advice Bureau, in which architecture or design was hardly ever mentioned.

Also, as usual, the actual business of participatory design proved too slow, too tortuous, too compromised and hedged about by rules and regulations, for most of the citizenry to stay with it for long. "The wall," it has been written, "...is an architectural solution to a noise problem that also has people living in it." And the form of the Wall was fixed even before the participation process could begin. The Shacky-whacky woodwork, in fact, is pure Ralph Erskine and owes nothing to local Folkacular construction. It is difficult not to conclude that this design exercise was "storefront" only in the sense of "window dressing." However sincere all the players may have been, it was only a charade.⁶⁵

Byker has repeatedly been discussed as a model of community architecture, redolent with local references to the area's past, built around a system of tenant participation that in the UK had seen only few precedents in the early 1970s.⁶⁶ For some it has come to stand as an early model of a local authority 'flagship development' in terms of promoting urban regeneration.⁶⁷ The Byker housing project was in a sense 'sold' to a resident population, although it featured strongly as an iconic architectural monument for an outside audience.

It housed a group of local residents, who had requested as far as possible to stay in the area. As a redevelopment area, Byker underwent material and social changes that were subject to conditions already imprinted by historical developments. That its history as a working class community was also continuously evoked to stress the importance of its cohesion and homogeneity left a strong marker on the commentaries by subsequent observers.⁶⁸ Its history spoke as much to external bodies as it did to those residents affirming and re-inventing a collective identity, to be facilitated in the Byker housing renewal project (Fig. 6.9).



Fig. 6.9 The Byker Wall, in the 1980s, seen from within the perimeter block. The informality of the architecture is further softened by the trees. In Fred Robinson, *Post-Industrial Tyneside*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle upon Tyne City and Libraries and Arts, 1988.

The quote by Reiner Banham above evokes a series of themes that signal the issue of interest to observers to the problems being discussed in the thesis. His concern was primarily with the architecture, the built form of Newcastle Council's prestigious housing project, as a statement about a publicly funded project that spanned private concerns as well as expressing the possibilities of tenant influence on public government of housing. Banham noted that 'participation' had been relative to the aesthetic formula set out by the architect, Ralph Erskine, the topography of the site and local authority's requirements to house a local population within the remit of housing objectives. But he also wondered about the quality of the democratic process that was claimed to have been embedded in

the design process: it was a slow process, delayed by bureaucracy, and the local population had its own social concerns, which Banham implied were personal and individualized, less inclined towards the Byker project as a whole. The concern of this section is to re-consider the issues of participation and democratic community formation in Byker. Despite the later celebration of the area contemporary detailed studies indicated that Banham was right to question the level of participation embedded in the project.⁶⁹ Although the Byker housing renewal scheme has been described as unique in terms of the learning process for the architects, who adopted an actively advocating role, it can be employed in the present comparison as an example of a large-scale prestige project, an experiment in social engagement through the establishment of new social organizations and support networks within a council housing system that was in decline by the 1970s.

Background to the Byker social housing scheme

The local village of Byker had since 1835 been incorporated within Newcastle's administrative borders, lying about one mile from the city centre, and had become a densely built up area during the 1880s and 1890s.⁷⁰ Like most working class areas on Tyneside Byker was laid out along grid-iron street networks, lined with Tyneside flats that inclined towards the river Tyne. Its population had been mainly employed in the shipyards and engineering works along the river. The tenure status of the area was dominated by private renting, which remained relatively constant until urban regeneration became topical in the late 1960s.⁷¹ Such homogeneity of tenure was complemented by a strong presence of a skilled working class population, despite the decline in the shipbuilding industry and the subsequent diversification of employment in the twentieth century. This social homogeneity then led to the perception that the Byker community was relatively stable and cohesive, providing a nurturing social environment for its residents.

Newcastle's town planning preparations provide the backdrop for Byker's development. It has been suggested that the city's Labour controlled Council in the 1960s, following national guidelines on urban clearances and renewal, declared its intention to reduce the density of the area. It failed to recognize the small household sizes that existed in the area and had instead planned for Parker-Morris sized housing, but it also assumed political support from a working class area, traditionally a Labour stronghold.⁷² Albeit that the Byker community was described as homogeneous, based on its stable residential and class make-up, local activity in societies and clubs (including trade unions) was relatively low and there was no expectation by 'leaders' of such groups to show an assertive front

towards local politicians in the face of regeneration.⁷³ Support of the Labour Party had dropped significantly during the 1960s indicating the low morale of its local members. The party's majority of 82.1 % in 1963 was lost to a Conservative candidate in the 1968 local election in what had been thought to be a loyal working class area. Such a change in the orientation of voters might be interpreted as a reaction to the urban renewal plans that were visible across working class areas in Newcastle.

During the late 1960s and into the 1970s Newcastle Council was experiencing a series of confrontations with radicalized tenant groups as was described in the previous chapter. Despite the Director of Housing's intention to follow the professional practice developing in housing management to include a level of tenant voice in housing renewal and improvement schemes, most of Newcastle's older housing areas did not experience the level of participation which became the hall mark of the Byker project. For their part, Newcastle Council's architects perceived their role to be administrative, working within the bureaucratic order of local government.⁷⁴ Municipal architects saw themselves as socially useful, performing a practical coordinating role, but nevertheless reliant on information from the municipal Planning and Housing departments to provide adequate housing plans. Due to their seeming lack of accountability within the local authority city architects were less inclined to take tenants' requirements into consideration. Instead they perceived the Council to be the client towards whom they were responsible.⁷⁵ Thus areas such as Benwell in the west end of the city became for the most part subject to design and planning strategies controlled from the Civic Centre.

By contrast, having experienced much confrontation and disruption in other parts of the city, a newly elected Conservative Council in 1968-69 declared that Byker should be planned as a community, keeping the local residents in the area as far as possible. 'Byker for Byker people' rang out in discussions and publications throughout the life of the project. Newcastle was running out of space for new build, and large groups of residents were moving out of the city. It would have been tempting for a new political leadership to be seen to break the mold of the inflexible housing provisions of the past. A landmark commission by an international British-Swedish architect such as Ralph Erskine, who was at the time working in the Tyneside area on the Killingworth new town area, would therefore have been a scoop. Not only would the architect bring in a new form of domestic housing, he would also signal a new way of managing the design process. The architect

would be a builder, a technician, a social engineer and 'a bit of a poet.'⁷⁶ Byker would in this way become 'an advertisement for Tory policy.'⁷⁷ The renewal process at Byker would suggest a new openness by the Council towards residents – a break with past centralized housing management practices.

The history of the area's architecture, and the strong emphasis on community participation has repeatedly been described as an early model of community architecture.

Contemporary critics however, questioned the efforts even as they materialized. Peter Malpass' detailed review of the Byker project for Newcastle Council, 1976, for example was not distributed very widely, leading to the perpetuation of its reputation.⁷⁸ It has in this way led to the almost mythic quality of the Byker project. A myth that might encompass both the pioneering efforts of the local authority to produce some sort of consultative process, however piecemeal, but it also absorbed the mythic qualities of a coherent working class community that was not without its own problems.⁷⁹ When communities are viewed retrospectively there is a danger of selective perception, neglecting the potentially oppressive, exclusive nature of communities.⁸⁰ The intentions behind the Council and Byker's architects, Ralph Erskine Associates might have been positive in their attempt to be more inclusive in the design phase, but they lent towards a view of the area based on ideas that were becoming obsolete, almost romantic views of a disappearing industrial past. Nevertheless there were signs that elements of community lingered.

A contemporary study of the political culture within Byker concluded that despite its vibrantly active community, which was to a great extent engaged in a host of organizations and societies, the local residents were disinterested in political activity.⁸¹ Local ties related to kinship bonds in the area, and shared memory of the traditional culture of living in Tyneside flats, albeit that there were signs by the early 1970s as Byker was being redeveloped that friendship bonds were being stretched beyond the area. Entertainment was also increasingly sought outside the Byker area. The territorial unit of Byker marked the vision of what was contained within the community, complicated by social distinctions that existed within its boundaries. It is well-known for example that the initial pilot project of the Byker renewal scheme, Janet Street, lying at the lower end of the Byker project was perceived to be of a lower social order than areas higher up the embankment. Even within a street there could be a respectable end and a less socially

distinctive end. But working class identity in Byker was nevertheless reactive towards the wider middleclass experiences beyond its perimeter (Fig. 6.10).⁸²

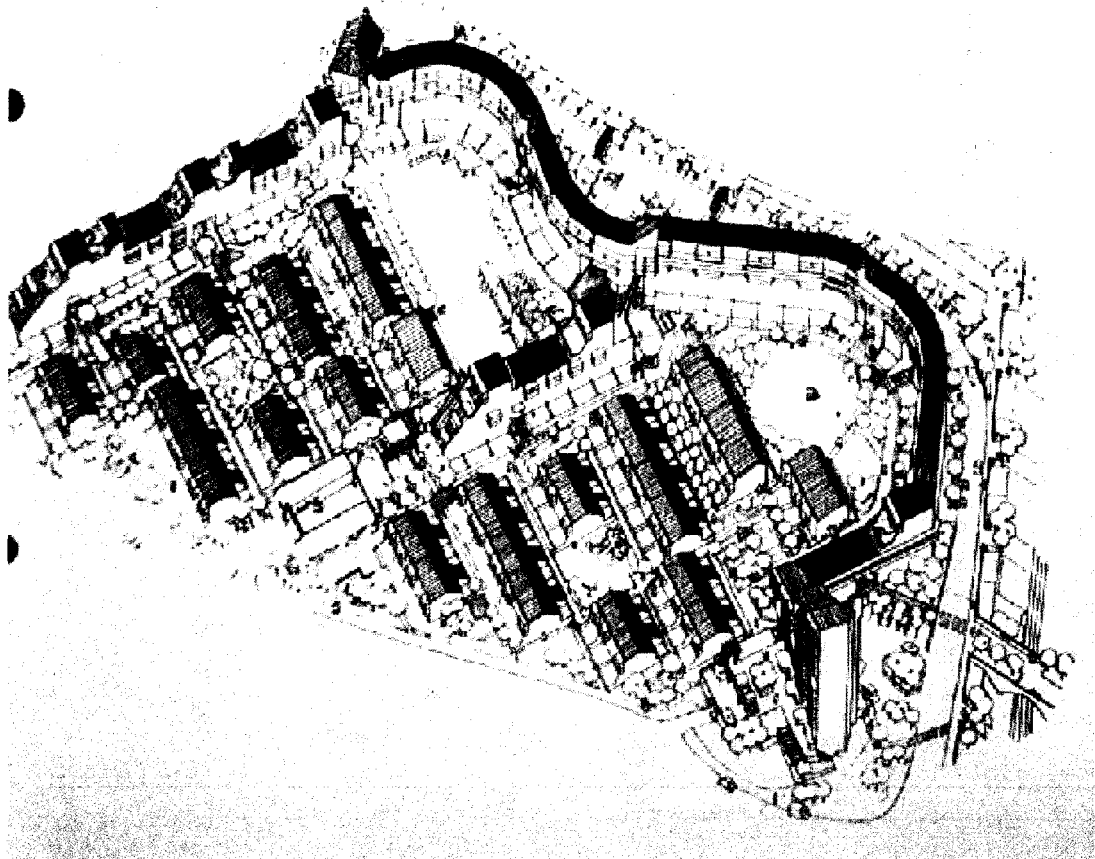


Fig. 6.10 An architectural plan of the Byker Wall perimeter block shown running in a serpentine line to the north east of the estate which in its central parts included a series of rows of terrace houses. The drawing indicates the ambition to include large numbers of trees. N.a. Byker Redevelopment. *Dunn Terrace Report and Summary of Redevelopment to Date*, Newcastle, 1974. Tyne and Wear Archive Services.

The strong self-identification of a specific working class culture in Byker did little to boost local self-confidence when faced with political representatives. As the Byker architects and community workers were to find out, local residents had little confidence in their Councillors, with little inclination to see themselves as effective political agents.⁸³ Yet, residents agreed that the area must be renewed as a complete unit:

You must allow cities to get on; you must have improvements. This street has better conditions than many, but most of them must come down and you can't leave one or two standing.⁸⁴

Indeed Byker's housing problems echoed those of other housing areas in Newcastle still dominated by the Tyneside flat: in 1966 36.5 % of housing had 3 or fewer rooms, 54.2 % had no hot water and 71 % shared a bath.⁸⁵

At a time when the Byker community was becoming dis-embedded from its past a contradictory push and pull motion was implemented both from within and without the community – but probably vocalised most strongly by external bodies. The pull of the past was found in the way the area's architect, Ralph Erskine, spoke of retaining the amenities and social facilities such as the corner shop and pubs in the heart of the area, in order to '...maintain as far as possible valued traditions and characteristics of the neighbourhood itself.'⁸⁶ What particular traditions he was thinking of was never made clear. One thing was certain though, the locals were patriotically loyal to their neighbourhood (*'lokalpatrioter'*) and the architects conceded that they would never be accepted as Byker people.⁸⁷ Erskine's contribution was to fuse neighbourhood unit principles with a romantic view embodied in a loose local symbolism, not just seen in the architectural frills of the housing, but in his desire to facilitate a peaceful transition to a new housing form.⁸⁸

The Byker renewal project proceeds

The story of the development of the Byker project has been explored at length elsewhere. What is interesting for this chapter is the extent to which various organizations attempted to create a sense of socio-cultural continuity and spaces for discussion about participation in Byker, during a period when the area turned into a building site. Some residents probably moved away, not just through relocations by the Council, but out of frustration with a project that for ten years or more left houses and construction sites exposed and streets muddy. Banham relates how the architect's office, a shop with an open door policy, allowed local residents to come and share their experiences and wishes for the area's design.

The egalitarian quest to create an informal conduit for residents to participate was nonetheless just one of many ways a notion of democratic participation was created.

Various organizations, including a Family Advice Centre, a Community Development Project (established by Newcastle Council of Social Services),⁸⁹ various residents' groups, and an Inner Areas Working Group (established by the Council) – with a second, lower level body, the Liaison Committee, as the primary contact forum – were established to facilitate discussion. Information was disseminated rapidly through newsletters, information boards on the site, show flats, and informal word of mouth exchanges. It was noticed that certain spaces for discussion, mainly the Council run Liaison Committee, allowed little room to agree on the meaning of democratic exchange, leading to residents adopting the defensive, small scale issues that they had resigned themselves to voice:

They seem to be content to use the Committee to air grievances and to obtain official replies to their complaints, and to derive information, from the officers about planned developments.⁹⁰

Local residents diffidently withdrew from contentious issues, and it seemed that a lack of working class enthusiasm for taking leadership prevented an effective, continuous communicative link between residents and the local authority housing providers.⁹¹ When the *Housing Review* observed the progress of the Janet Street area it concluded that it was due only to outside initiatives that a residents' association was set up to facilitate good communication. By 1974 when the houses had been completed in that area, motivation to sustain the association was shrinking.⁹² Although many other residents' associations were equally engaged in informing themselves on their local housing developments - almost one for each street or neighbourhood planned for clearance - they often folded once residents acquired their new homes: 'Their active members relapse into private life once they get a new house – one of the penalties of successful re-housing.'⁹³ In this view the space of social housing could do little other than provide for domestic quietude, and was not perceived to enable continuous dialogue.

Informal mediation

Residents' self-perception of the area as a cohesive, respectable working-class arena, where neighbourliness created a strong 'community spirit' was reiterated more informally in local exhibitions and photographs, recorded not by residents themselves, but by a politically conscious Scandinavian.⁹⁴ Exhibitions and displays of these photographs (Fig. 6.11), of local children's artwork and concerts of folk music provided a stage for the representation of the strength of the community's coherence.⁹⁵ Furthermore Newcastle

Council via Byker Liaison Committee organised informal entertainment for local children, setting up a 'best Guy' competition on Bonfire Night.⁹⁶ An urban farm project led by the Community Development Project was established, and elements of the past were also drawn into the public domain through the local newsletter, the *Byker Phoenix*, which arose as a vehicle of information on the re-housing process.

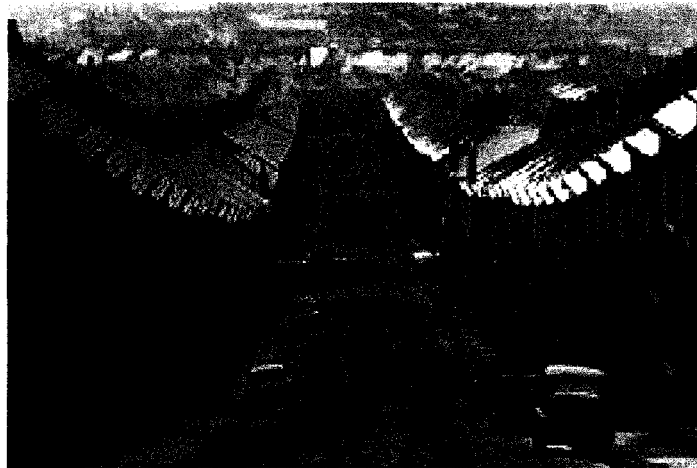


Fig. 6.11 A street scene from Byker, Kendal Street, before bulldozers and architects arrived in the early 1970s. Sirkka-Liisa Kontinen, Amber, <http://www.amber-online.com/gallery/exhibition32/image32-145.html>

The *Byker Phoenix* was a 'community newspaper' published in a similar spirit to the *Bulletin* of the West End Tenants Association, to inform and build community ties, inform and enable.⁹⁷ It reported on the activities of local clubs, such as the gardening and model clubs, contained poetry and illustrations by local residents and commentary on local developments. It played a lesser role in informing tenants and residents on the formal processes of participation, which existed in the area. Instead it included stories on historic Byker and reported on issues of complaint, which might be of interest to residents, such as problems of vandalism, or considered potential new activities in the area, such as setting up guided tours for the many visitors that were starting to come to view the housing scheme.⁹⁸

If the *Byker Phoenix* aimed to fuse the community it was also used by the housing authorities to defensively explain why Byker could not always remain solely for 'Byker

people.’ When Shelter intended to temporarily move in homeless people to sections of the Byker area, residents were reassured that their neighbours would be policed and would not cause problems.⁹⁹ The incomers signed an agreement not to disturb their neighbours, but there was no question that they would be queue jumping before local residents. Indeed it was suggested that this temporary solution might be a social necessity, as other means of housing the homeless were in Bed and Breakfast or in hostels – probably a bargaining point as Shelter sought to persuade Byker residents that the homeless too required reciprocal social support. Byker may inwardly have been a strong community, but to incomers and outside observers it was at times suspicious and exclusive. The level of democratic openness in this area is questionable as the social differentiation and closure towards newcomers presented an inhibiting restraint on the community.

Architectural elements

Peter Malpass concluded in his detailed report of the Byker redevelopment project that attempts to ameliorate the physical and social living environments of inner city residents through planned destruction and re-construction at the same time sought ‘to preserve a form of life which was in large measure created by those hardships which the policy makers wish to eliminate.’¹⁰⁰ Even if intentions had been to re-house the local community, the reality of a reduced number of housing units in the area, as well as the protracted period that saw the area as a perpetual building site led to many tenants being re-housed (to new urban areas such as Killingworth and Cramlington) or moving away. In the final count an original population of 12,500 the Byker population was reduced to 6,500.¹⁰¹ Thus the constituency of an area stated to be ‘Byker for Byker people’ underwent upheaval beyond repair in any case. The residents who remained were fiercely proud of their area. Whether this could be read through the architectural structures as has been suggested by post-modern architectural writers is a different matter.

The previous chapter accounted for the positive statements made by Newcastle’s Director of Housing on the incorporation of tenants into local management teams, which in Byker led to a degree of consultation with residents on design decisions. However at the time Byker was built no systematic approach was attempted. Instead a rather ad hoc process of involving temporary committees and study groups in the design process of their new dwellings ultimately resulted in very little tenant influence, albeit the housing residents received was far better than the defunct Tyneside flats they had left. Residents did have a

say into the colour schemes of their homes, and the Byker architectural office used colour identification and defined garden spaces to mark spatial orientation, in a way that evoked Oscar Newman's ideas on defensible space, rather than the previously undefined and open public spaces that surrounded council tower block housing for example.¹⁰² Communal areas with seating in sheltered areas were designed to foster informal neighbourliness.¹⁰³

The architects in Erskine's local office had employed the neighbourhood planning model as the basis for the lay-out of the Byker estate. Where the neighbourhood differed from earlier estates in Newcastle was its generous allocation of trees and planting and the polychrome nature of the detailing of the housing. Most contemporary architectural critics agreed with Banham that the woodwork appliqued onto the surface of 'The Wall,' or provided as shedding and trellis work for the low rise housing was flimsy-looking and would require much maintenance.¹⁰⁴ Wood used in this way was new in Britain and it needed consideration in budgets for maintenance in the future.¹⁰⁵

Thus the neighbourhood until lay at the core of the Byker housing project, and critical voices noted that Byker did continue many conventions of earlier modern styles. It continued the social engineering efforts that were implicit in the environmental determinism of its design.¹⁰⁶ Others evaluated its 'tacked on' balconies and 'pergolettes' as a 'veil' that disguised its class-based nature:

Its cheapness elicits two opposing responses, that of enjoying the crude effectiveness of the off-the-shelf greenhousery, and that of feeling it is rubbing the poor's noses into the blatant fact that their housing is not as well made as that of the better off.¹⁰⁷

Thus architectural evaluations of Byker narrated the different political perspectives that continued to sustain the social critique of social housing. On the one hand those inspired by communitarian ideals of mutuality and local support considered the estate a relative success, on the other skepticism continued on the role of 'window dressing' existing social equalities. In retrospect some have considered Byker to be a model to be emulated by other community housing projects, described as an 'innovative-local' flagship project. Despite its high cost in maintenance, systemic technical problems affecting several households, higher than average rents, the iconic status of the buildings has had a lasting effect.¹⁰⁸ It nevertheless contained continuing reflections of class differences, and its

democratic values will need to be weighed against the social implications in the areas over the long term.

It is questionable whether Byker can be seen as a proto-flagship development with a marketable impact for the city as a whole, or as a vehicle for future urban redevelopment projects in other cities.¹⁰⁹ What seems to have been learnt from Byker was maybe not only the effectiveness of resident participation, which seems to have taken the shape of tactics that were being deployed elsewhere in the city during the same period. For some it was rather the awakening awareness within the architects that they had to adopt different roles from the prescriptive imposing figure they had posed in previous generations. The definition of an expert working on behalf of and without responsibilities to a local resident base was changing. The people and the architect in the specific urban redevelopment situation needed to learn from each other to sustain a workable environment of exchange. Rather, Vernon Gracie, of Erskine Architects, suggested that such a relationship was difficult and needed careful, sensitive nurture:

While things go right, the degree of involvement and commitment of a professional team to consultation and the giving of information will be considerable. But if things should go horribly wrong, it is difficult to see a professional team taking a hammering for year upon year without the goodwill vanishing and the more traditional approach to redevelopment reemerging.¹¹⁰

What tenants have learnt from the Byker project would require a different research strategy from that undertaken here. The local authority of Newcastle almost ceased building housing in 1979,¹¹¹ only finishing touches to Byker were being completed. That a proposal for the area to achieve listed status by English Heritage in 1999 suggests that many read the Byker urban renewal scheme as a standing monument to a moment in time and to local identity, but also signaling lasting change to housing strategies in Newcastle (Fig. 6.12).¹¹²



Fig. 6.12 A contemporary photograph of the decorative elements on the façade of the Byker Wall.
http://home.freeuk.net/timarchive/html/body_byker_wall.htm

Comparative implications

Gellerupparken and the Byker Wall projects imply very different solutions to the problem of shaping communities in a meaningful form during a time of social change. Their differences were substantiated by their spatial and material qualities, the constitution of their residents and the housing systems, which structured their management.

Gellerupparken's foundations rested strongly in the long tradition of the Danish housing movement. Nevertheless by the time it was constructed Brabrand Bologforening's management had moved beyond a local democratic anchor and ambitiously revealed the dangers of scheduling large-scale housing programmes under conditions of virtual monopoly. Byker conversely was a vision of a centrally controlled housing authority attempting to move away from a total top-level management approach to a local level, informed by notions of democracy and participation. The Housing Department had however little experience of participation in running its housing projects, and it deployed architects commissioned externally. Whereas Gellerupparken can be seen as arising from the hubris of a housing association Committee that aspired to giant project planning, but lacked the flexibility to adjust to unexpected social and economic changes, Byker was projected as a prestige model, a tool to 'sell' the vision of a political party, symbolically breaking with housing history for the sake of self-aggrandisement and political competition.

Both projects inherited their planning roots from the 1950s, as town and city developments were growing apace. Gellerupparken was designed and planned in the early 1960s, finally completed more than ten years later, when Byker was then under way. It is this shift in perspective between the architectural ambitions of Fordist architectural Modernism in contrast to a post-industrial urban renewal project that distinguishes their separate architectural trajectories. In both the case of Gellerupplanen and the Byker development the dimension of territorial distinctiveness, the defined neighbourhood unit, containing both a unique physical environment as well as the social life within it was important.

Although the two areas arose around the same time, they reflect the changing aesthetic values that have come to be described in terms of Modernism (symbolically embodied in concrete slab blocks) and post-modernism (evoked through bricks, polychromy and attached decoration), while also pointing to the shifting ground in politico/socio-cultural strategies of post-modernity that saw an increasing focus on the particularities of the local and contextual, the human scale and 'using improvised forms of organization.'¹¹³ The semiotic architectural project at Byker was reflected post-Fordist priorities in the face of an international economic down-turn due to the oil crisis and de-industrialisation.¹¹⁴ Byker was enclosed by the spatial configuration of the city of Newcastle, and was defined by the material and historical contingencies of its site. Byker might also have been conceived along utopian lines, but it was a project for the present, based on its inherited, local past, but challenged by its residents' wish to abandon their old Tyneside housing for something new. Thus its community life might have been retrospectively seeking a sense of working class cohesion, while its improved material frame was to incorporate the images of the past in allusions and ambiguous architectural gestures. Gellerupparken buried its topographical past of agriculture and village life beneath an urban vision that was international in scope. Residents had no shared history other than their connection to Århus, and soon new Århusians came to the area who had little shared reference to local or Danish national identities. New forms of social life in Gellerupparken were planned to start through informal societies underpinning an infrastructure of institutionalized democracy.

To provide an environment conducive to participation in social life a fragmented set of forums existed in Byker. Brabrand Boligforening in contrast attempted to manage its

resident participation from a series of closely knit organizational groupings. However basic assumptions about the value of citizen participation were shared. The notion of an active citizen committed to making a difference in their local social situation drove the institutional frameworks in both projects. Scales and levels of representative democracy infused the debates, but democracy and participation clearly meant different things to different actors in both housing areas. In Brabrand Boligforening there was an official, public process to include residents in decision making processes that provided it with an ultimate authority on major decisions. Representative democracy was the fundamental model upholding the management of the estate, set into a pyramidal committee structure intended to provide a clear line of accountability and communication. Unfortunately it inherited a long-standing tradition of business-like management with oligarchic overtones that had grown above the need for local sensibilities. This management structure needed to be challenged and renewed, but was only made apparent at a serious crisis point in the housing association's life. In Byker on the other hand the piecemeal nature of different types of tenants' groups, of committees with limited life spans, prevented a sense of continuity and trust in decision-making processes when faced with public administrative processes. Mutual suspicion between tenants and council officers, administrators and Councillors created on the one hand a sense of fatalism in tenants and their subsequent retreat into privacy, while Councillors could maintain a front of accountability that belied the actual complexity of strategies of local housing management, set into an ever-changing political, economic and cultural-aesthetic process. In Byker the inherited reluctance by the working class residents to engage effectively as active political agents, and their reduced means in terms of resources to challenge issues effectively, prevented residents from controlling their housing situation. Similarly determined housing management had been Brabrand Boligforening's strategy for building a grand, system built housing area, encouraged by national housing policies to provide mass housing. Ultimately then, despite a different set of administrative and organisational structures that have been the continuing focus throughout the thesis, the democratic value-system underlying the two cities' housing systems appears to share similar features: a belief in active citizenship and representative democracy and hence investment in social capital and civil society.

Interestingly, what both cases reveal is the incorporation of ideas and interpretations of foreign impulses within their housing areas. In the case of Gellerupparken the intention

behind the study visits by Committee members were used to inform their contribution to the Modernist housing project they were building. Contemporary architectural discourse generally traversed national borders through the increasing speed of publishing, the media and professional networks. The building of Gellerupparken was a juncture where a set of internationally shared architectural signs could be provided for a local setting. But the material culture of the site provided the backdrop for the tensions within a local political culture that was undergoing change. The symbolic potency of the concrete slab blocks, and the open landscaped was nevertheless being challenged as an authoritarian housing form. It has been suggested here that the visits may rather have provided a means of affirming the route the Committee had chosen. Their interpretation of neighbourhood units, the problems of system building processes and the coming of a post-industrial retail and consumer culture in large cities abroad substantiated their vision of a new town, and supported their self-identity as city builders.

A similar explanation of the reasoning behind Newcastle Council's commission by a Swedish architect to build a new urban renewal scheme can be seen: by breaking with the total development schemes planned by the Labour party in the past, the project advertised the new Conservative Council leadership. The appointment of a naturalized Swede to design Byker represents a juncture in Newcastle that involves a series of minute transfers and exchanges of cultural references that found its equivalence through the international travel abroad by Brabrand Boligforening's Committee. So why did Newcastle Council not appoint a British architect to oversee the project? The answer may lie in the culturally fluid identity of Ralph Erskine Associates. Ralph Erskine brought with him notions of a Swedish romantic tradition that had retained elements of Swedish modernism combined with thoughts on participatory design current in architectural advocacy discourse. The participatory project assumed a level of equality between the actors on the project that may have functioned differently in a Nordic context, but in Newcastle was engulfed in a class-based political culture. A radical approach to an architectural project was made acceptable by the British-Swedish bridge, the continuities of a British way of life conjoined by a sensitivity towards open dialogue. The mutual prestige gained by Newcastle Council and Erskine's office in the construction of a great experimental urban redevelopment project became clear as the shape of the process became publicized. While both Brabrand Boligforening and Newcastle Council were project owners and housing providers, and despite the fact that the domestic housing in each case differed

considerably, a shared notion of a social provision for resident involvement and identification with the community building process existed, albeit affected by local contingencies.

Whether the foundations for residents' involvement in Gellerupparken and Byker were touched by an essentially Scandinavian sensibility in both cases is a moot point.

Newcastle Council made a continued effort to manage tensions in its relationships with tenant groups across Newcastle, and the Byker project was not without its problems, while Brabrand Boligforening was shaken to its foundations by its own historical trajectories - only with crisis and contention was a major intervention made. Its residents' democratic system simmered and evolved in the background.

In the late 1970s a group of Danish architects, including Jan Gehl, an influential contributor to the discourse of community architecture, wrote of Byker in an article published by the School of Architecture in Århus:

Despite all these limitations it is not difficult to retain a mostly positive impression of an extraordinary urban renewal project. And neither is it difficult to retain the impression that a rare instance of high quality planning implementation has been seen. Only few places in Europe do you experience that residents in new housing, and especially in urban renewal areas, spontaneously grab the camera festooned tourist, and asks whether you are an architect and then goes on to eulogise about 'our architects.'

This is something you experience in Byker, amongst broken bricks, cranes, new and old houses. It probably explains the Byker experiment and the level of professional contribution ...better than all the pictures, the figures and all the words.¹¹⁵

It is maybe not surprising that such admiration by Danish architects should be shown in Byker. Low-rise, high-density housing such as that found in parts of the Byker Wall area was being considered as a suitable vehicle for symbolically loading domestic architecture with notions of democracy in Denmark. Brabrand Boligforening for its part built a section, the Holmstrupgård area based on the feeling that housing should be more than 'just houses.' However Ralph Erskine also revealed a major influence on his housing projects of the early 1970s. In the Foreword to Jan Gehl's book, *Life between Buildings*, he expressed his kinship with Gehl and the sensitivity to 'the undramatic and even intimate everyday needs of people when they are functioning individually or in groups.'¹¹⁶ Although such readings could confer a level of influence on the aesthetics of place, they

also imply the role of actors in a process of transferring dimensions of democratic planning between an international architectural discourse and the locally implemented project.

¹ Bent Flyvbjerg suggests the case study is the ideal area for the student to learn their subject. The proximity to the reality of the case enables the researcher to almost 'experiment' in a singular probe, yet nevertheless still consider generalised conditions. The two estates almost become cases within cases in this thesis. Bent Flyvbjerg, *Rationalitet og magt*, Vol.1, Odense: Akademisk Forlag, 1991, ch. 8 Eksemplets magt.

² There have been many critical studies of the rational and economic Modernist architectural project. From an architectural historical view see e.g. Peter G. Rowe, *Modernity and Housing*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995. The Geographer, Alice Coleman, responded to the modernist project through her quantitative study of council estates in London, Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial, Vision and Reality in Planned Housing*, Hilary Shipman Ltd., 1990

³ Natasha Vall used the Byker Wall as example in her comparative examination of Newcastle and Malmö; see her *Explorations in Comparative History*, unpublished PhD, Newcastle: University of Northumbria, 2000, ch. 3 Labour Politics and Housing. For a description of the Byker Wall as a flagship development see Hedley Smyth, *Marketing the City. The role of flagship developments in urban regeneration*, London: E&FN Spon, 1994, ch. 13 *passim*.

⁴ Anne Power, *Estates on the Edge*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999. For an analysis of the social processes leading to the exclusion of Turkish immigrants in Gellerupparken see Bülent Diken, *Strangers, Ambivalence and Social Theory*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1998, Ch. 3 "The Fear of Touching" and the Suburban Ghetto

⁵ For an historical outline of the critique of the Modernist neighbourhood unit see Mats Frantzén and Eva Sandstedt, *Grannskap och stadsplanering. Om stat och bygande i efterkrigstidens Sverige*, Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1981. A contemporary sociological examination of life in a system built Danish suburbia can be found in Sten Martini, *Nyere forstadmiljøer*, Cph.: Socialforskningsinstituttet, 1974

⁶ August F. Schmidt, *Brabrand og Aarslev Sognes Historie*, Brabrand-Aarslev: Brabrand-Aarslev Kommune, 1962, p.152

⁷ Hugo Sørensen, a Social Democratic member of the Council from 1964-1969 reminisced nostalgically on the close proximity to the parish Council residents during the earlier decades of his Council work. With the 1970 local authority mergers he regretted the bureaucratic distance between residents in need of social help and the civil servants providing it. *Demokraten* 28.09.69

⁸ *BB gennem 25 år*, Brabrand-Aarslev: Brabrand Boligforening, 1973, p.2

⁹ *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, 26.04.1973

¹⁰ Arbejderbo, *Arbejdernes Organisation til fremme af Almennyttigt Boligbyggeri, 1941-1966*, Cph.: Arbejderbo, 1966

¹¹ *Arkitektens Ugehæfte*, 1953, (55), p.389-391

¹² Brabrand Boligforening, Archive: *Scrapbook Vol. 1*, no source, 19.06.58

¹³ Brabrand Boligforening, Archive: *Scrapbook Vol. 2*, no source, 21.02.61

¹⁴ The Danish economy changed in the late 1950s from being one of mainly agricultural to industrial production. It is in this light that the hopes of future progress as represented in the 1960s housing estates may be seen. See Klaus Petersen, *Legitimität und Krise. Die Geschichte des Dänischen Wohlfahrtsstaates 1945-1973*, Berlin: Verlag Arno Spitz, 1998, p.159-162

¹⁵ Brabrand Boligforening, Archive: Itinerary of a visit to England 07.09.65

¹⁶ Brabrand Boligforening, Archive: Itinerary of a visit to Britain 25.08-29-09.67

¹⁷ Brabrand Boligforening, Archive: Itinerary of a visit to Berlin 25.09-28.09-69, with notes.

¹⁸ Brabrand Boligforening, Archive: *Scrapbook Vol. 2*, no source, n.d. (1962)

¹⁹ *Demokraten*, 12.01.64

²⁰ *Århus Stiftstidende*, 12.01.64

²¹ For an expanded discussion see chapter 4. Erik Nygaard, *Tag over hovedet*, Cph.: Arkitektens Forlag, 1984, chs. 13,14 and 15 discusses industrialised construction techniques and its promotion and employment by the housing authorities during the 1960s.

²² *Demokraten* 29.11.69. Brabrand Boligforening, *Vi stiller krav til Fremtiden. 50. Brabrand Boligforening i det 21. århundrede*, Brabrand: Brabrand Boligforening, 1998, p.35

²³ *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, 01.11.1973

²⁴ *Demokraten* 15.03.72 commenting on the negative reaction by the conservative paper Berlingske Tidende.

²⁵ Asger Nørgaard Larsen, Gjellerup-planen som Mønster-Byggeri, *Århus Stiftstidende*, 12.01.1964

²⁶ *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, 05.05.1966

²⁷ Erik Høgh, Bybygning – en sociologisk kommentar, *Boligen*, 1967, p.5-9

²⁸ Brabrand Boligforening, archive, *Scrapbook Vol. 5*, no source, n.d. Article on the design of family dwellings, Hans Erling Langkilde, the architect and writer of popular educational books on housing spoke of the need to place the family at the centre of housing policy debates.

²⁹ Brabrand Boligforening, *Det er ikke nok at bygge boliger*, Århus: Brabrand Boligforening, 1971

³⁰ *Demokraten*, 03.02.1965: 'Den lave, tætte og differentierede bydannelse, der har sine rødder i den danske provinsby, huse med haver eller rækkehuse med haverum...'

³¹ See the 'discovery' by Erik Høgh of the functionary, the new middling social group, to whom architects would need to become more accountable, it was thought: This group was discerning of planning and architecture and understood its own needs well, seemingly with a preference for the detached family house with garden, creating a new challenge for architects in the future it was suggested. Erik Høgh, Boligundersøgelse II, Mammen archive, Niels Albertsen, Architect School in Århus.

³² Brabrand Boligforening, archive, *Scrapbook Vol. 4*, no source, n.d. (c. May 1964)

³³ *Århus Stiftstidende* 04.07.64, Brabrand Boligforening Business Manager: '...eget hus paa kollektiv basis.'

³⁴ *Århus Stiftstidende* 19.06.66; *Demokraten* 18.06.66

³⁵ Advert in *Demokraten* 15.02.70

³⁶ *Århus Stiftstidende* 21.01.69, advert 'Brabrand Aarslev kommune i udvikling' – possibly a collaborative promotional campaign between the association and the local authority.

³⁷ Brabrand Boligforening, Archive *Scrapbook Vol. 10*, no source, n.d.

³⁸ Brabrand Boligforening archive, *Scrapbook Vol. 10*, *Århus Stiftstidende* 15.04.69

1969: new members: 1869; total membership: 6405

1973: new members: 1554; total membership: 10,671

³⁹ See *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, 17.04.69; Knud Dynnes Hansen (Chair of the association's Leisure Committee) later deployed the persuasiveness of the exhibition as a device in his critical commentary on the association's failure to live up to its promises. Knud Dynnes Hansen, Til lykke til de 10.000 ejere, *Århus Stiftstidende*, 29.04.1974

⁴⁰ The local residents' magazine *Skræppebladet* in 1970 listed 18 societies and clubs for residents, including the brewery society, model railway club, music and photography societies, various sports clubs, gardening societies and discussion clubs.

⁴¹ Residents were repeatedly encouraged to be proactive in engaging in the local social environment, see e.g. *Demokraten*, 15.02.1970; *Politiken*, 16.02.1970 saw the brewery club as alleviating the problem of alienation in Gellerupparken.

⁴² The local press reported on social activities at Gellerupparken, see e.g. *Århus Stiftstidende*, 05.11.1970, while the press from other cities developing similar estates visited to gather optimistic news on the proactive nature of the new neighbourhood. Mulle Liebmann, Trivsel mellem høje huse, *Fyns Stiftstidende*, 31.07.1972

⁴³ *Århus Stiftstidende*, 16.02.1970

⁴⁴ A claim made by the Chair of the Brewery Club, Knud Dynnes Hansen, in *Århus Stiftstidende*, 19.04.1970

⁴⁵ Over a short period of time he did, however, seem to become disillusioned with the community building project under the Brabrand Boligforening banner; his changing point of view can be followed in a string of feature articles which he wrote for the local and national press, see for example Knud Dynnes Hansen, Til lykke til de 10.000 ejere, *Århus Stiftstidende*, 29.04.1974; Knud Dynnes Hansen, Hvis hoveder skal rulle?, *Århus Stiftstidende*, 16.10.1975

⁴⁶ Knud Dynnes Hansen, *Politiken*, Kronik, 27.12.72; Ole Kvist and Bent Fjord, *Beboeraktivitet og beboerdemokrati - en undersøgelse blandt beboerne på Tovesvej, et nyere almennyttigt byggeri i Brabrand*, Århus: typed manuscript, 1978.

- ⁴⁷ A series of articles in the press reported on the event: *Scrapbook Vol. 11*, no source 05.05.70; 09.05.70; 29.05.70; *Århus Stiftstidende*, 24.06.70. It would have cost more than 80,000 Kr to send 6 people to Japan.
- ⁴⁸ Brabrand Boligforening, Archive, *Scrapbook Vol. 1, Demokraten*, n.d.
- ⁴⁹ Drawings, plans and many articles had already appeared in the housing movement press before the representative committee's meeting, 17.01.1964, *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, 17.01.1964; even with residents' democracy propounded by the NFDHA the residents at Gellerupparken complained that drawing and plans for new housing would appear in the press before their representatives had seen them. *Demokraten*, 01.05.1970
- ⁵⁰ *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, 26.04.1973
- ⁵¹ This was the allegation made by more sensationalist elements of the press, and the leftist radical commentary, *Ekstra Bladet*, 10.10.1975.
- ⁵² A. Power, *Hovels to High Rise, State housing in Europe since 1870*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.272; A. Power, *Estates on the Edge*, p.47-60
- ⁵³ *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, 09.05.1974; *Århus Stiftstidende*, 11.05.1974; *Jyllands Posten*, 28.08.1975; *Brabrand og Omegns Avis*, 03.09.1975
- ⁵⁴ J.A., *Betonslum? NEJ! Kvalitetsboliger for alle*, *Beboerbladet*, 1982, p.6-7
- ⁵⁵ *Historisk Værksted* (1983), p.54
- ⁵⁶ *Århus Stiftstidende*, 03.12.1977
- ⁵⁷ Due to continuing problems in the late 1970s and early 1980 Gellerupparken was subject to several initiatives to improve local social life, see e.g. P. Rhode and Erik Skov (eds.), *Fra boligområde til bymiljø, socialt, kulturelt fysisk*. Århus: Århus Council, 1985; Erik Skov and Anne Marie Kjærsgaard, *Det Tværfaglige samarbejde i Gellerupparken*, unpublished manuscript report, Århus: 1984; Henrik Hvidtfeldt, Peter Rhode and Erik Skov, *New Goals and Methods in Connection with the Reshaping of Multi-storey Housing Areas – the Gellerup Project*, *Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research*, 1986, 3, p.145-154
- ⁵⁸ *Århus Stiftstidende*, 24.11.1971
- ⁵⁹ *Demokraten*, 31.10.1971 Knud Blach Petersen now regretted having designed and supported the building of concrete blocks of flats.
- ⁶⁰ *Århus Stiftstidende*, 24.11.1971; The experience of neighbourhood relations was narrated as friendly but distant was described in *Jyllands Posten* 05.09.1970
- ⁶¹ Alison Ravetz suggests that council tenancy in Britain did not necessarily 'provide a satisfying collective identity' and so ideals and aspiration of various political hue, she suggests, could not be wholly carried through. A. Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture*, London: Routledge, 2001, p. 154-155
- ⁶² Interview Torben Overgaard, current Business Manager, Brabrand Boligforening, July 2001. Overgaard was involved with the management of the housing association since the mid-1970s and had first hand experience of the repercussions of the crisis on the running of the organisation.
- ⁶³ A. Ravetz (2001), *ibid.*
- ⁶⁴ L. Jensen, *Stuck in the Middle? The Danish Social Housing Associations between State, Market and Civic Society*, Cph.: Copenhagen University, Institut for Statskundskab, 1995; L. Jensen Jensen, *Demokratiforestillinger i den almennyttige boligsektor*, Cph.: Institut for Statskundskab, 1997; L. Jensen, *Images of Democracy in Danish Social Housing*, in M. Thompson, G. Grendstad, and P. Selle, *Cultural Theory as Political Science*, Routledge, 1999
- ⁶⁵ Reynier Banham, *The great wall of Tyne*, *New Society*, 06.02.1975
- ⁶⁶ Peter Rowe, *Housing and Modernity, Modernity and Housing*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995 Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, London: Academy Editions, 1987
- ⁶⁷ Hedley Smyth, *Marketing the City. The role of flagship developments in urban regeneration*, London E & FN Spon, 1994, ch. 13
- ⁶⁸ A. Ravetz, Appraisal, *The Architect's Journal*, 14.04.1976, p.735-743, Jan Gehl, Lars Gemzøe and Steen Holmgren, *Byker – en blødere by, Blød By*, 1978, 1, p.42-45
- ⁶⁹ Richard Batley, *Byker. A Study of Communication between Planners and the Public in an Area affected by Slum Clearance*, Durham: University of Durham, unpublished MA thesis, 1971; Peter Malpass, *Rebuilding Byker, Twenty Years Hard Labour*, unpublished manuscript, Newcastle Local Studies Collection, 1976

- ⁷⁰ S. Middlebrook, *Newcastle. Its growth and Achievement*, Newcastle: S R Publishers Ltd., 1969, p.198; Tom Faulkner, *Architecture in Newcastle*, in Bill Lancaster and Robert Colls, *Newcastle upon Tyne, a Modern History*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co, 2001, p.234
- ⁷¹ R. Batley provided figures of tenure held by his survey group: owner-occupiers: 8.3% (in the 1966 Census); council renting: 13.9%; private renting 76.8% and other 1%, R. Batley, op. cit., p.21
- ⁷² N. Vall, op. cit., p.103
- ⁷³ R. Batley, *ibid.*, p. 294-324
- ⁷⁴ Peter Malpass, *Professionalism in architecture and the design of local authority houses*, Newcastle: university of Newcastle, 1973, unpublished MA dissertation, p.173-188
- ⁷⁵ op. cit., p.220
- ⁷⁶ R. Erskine, Byker, *Architectural Review*, 1974, 934, p.346
- ⁷⁷ P. Malpass, op. cit. p. 305
- ⁷⁸ P. Malpass, (1976), op. cit.
- ⁷⁹ R. Batley questioned whether Byker still continued to retain a community anchored in working class cohesion based on shared working lives, op. cit, p. 66
- ⁸⁰ See the considerations of Z. Bauman on the problems in defining a notion of 'community' especially Z. Bauman, *An Overture, or Welcome to Elusive Community* and Ch.1 *passim*: *The Agony of Tantalus, Community*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004
- ⁸¹ R. Batley, op. cit. p. 405. Batley found e.g. that the Byker Community association had existed since 1950 and had between 100-200 members.
- ⁸² R. Batley, op. cit. p. 137
- ⁸³ Due in part to residents' mistrust of local government leaders and a working class culture of resistance to the idea of taking political leadership from below. Tony Hill (ed.), *The Social Consequences of Redevelopment*, Newcastle: Byker Action Centre and Family Advice Centre, 1973, p.2; P. Malpass, op. cit., p.239, R. Batley, op. cit., p.404
- ⁸⁴ R. Batley, op. cit., p.233
- ⁸⁵ op. cit., p.83-84
- ⁸⁶ From the 'Plan of Intent' by R. Erskine, 1970, repeated in *Architectural Review*, 1974 (934), p.346-362
- ⁸⁷ R. Erskine, Byker, *Arkitektur*, 1976, (8) – scrapbook in the Local Studies Collection, Newcastle Central Libraries
- ⁸⁸ On Erskine's architectural romanticism see Mats Egelius, *Ralph Erskine, Architect*, Stockholm, Bygglärolaget, 1990, p.12
- ⁸⁹ William Hampton and Iris Walkland, *Byker Community Development Project 1974-1978*, Newcastle: Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service, 1979
- ⁹⁰ P. Malpass (1976), op. cit., p.218
- ⁹¹ op. cit. p.239
- ⁹² Erskines Architect, *Housing Review*, Nov.-Dec. 1974, p.156
- ⁹³ A. Ravetz op. cit. p.742
- ⁹⁴ The Finnish photographer Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen. S.L. Konttinen, *Byker*, Newcastle: Boodaxe Books, 1988
- ⁹⁵ *Byker: Events Guide and Exhibition*, 1972, May 20th
- ⁹⁶ Byker Liaison Committee, minutes, 12.10.1977
- ⁹⁷ A Ravetz, Estate Journalism, part of the cultural history of council estates, *Housing Review*, 39 (6), 1990, p.136-137
- ⁹⁸ *Byker Phoenix*, 1975, 3
- ⁹⁹ Stephen Griffith, Shelter in Byker, *Byker Phoenix*, 1975, 3, p.18
- ¹⁰⁰ Peter Malpass, op. cit., p.300
- ¹⁰¹ Erskines, *Housing Review*, Nov. and Dec., 1974, p.155, Newcastle Local History Collection
- ¹⁰² Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space - People and Design in the violent City*, Architectural Press, 1972
- ¹⁰³ A. Ravetz, (2001), op. cit., p.191
- ¹⁰⁴ *Evening Chronicle*, 11.07.80
- ¹⁰⁵ David Dunster, *Walled Town, Progressive Architecture*, Aug. 1979, p.68-73; Newcastle City Libraries, Local Studies Collection, Byker Misc. Articles

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- ¹⁰⁵ Smyth, op. cit., p. 230-235
- ¹⁰⁶ *Progressive Architecture*, Aug. 1979, p.67, Newcastle Libraries, Local History Collection
- ¹⁰⁷ David Dunster, op. cit., p.71
- ¹⁰⁸ Smyth, op. cit., p. 230-235
- ¹⁰⁹ Despite listing the problems that arose during the Byker project, Smyth is keen to stress its impact, and interprets it as a post-modern exemplar of urban renewal, see Smyth, op. cit. ch.13 Byker Wall
- ¹¹⁰ Vernon Gracie quoted in H. Caygill, *Architectural Postmodernism: The Retreat of an Avantgarde?*, in Roy Boyne and Ali Rattansi, *Postmodernism and Society*, London: Macmillan, 1991, p.280
- ¹¹¹ Stuart Cameron and Paul Crompton, Housing, in Fred Robinson (ed.), *Post-Industrial Tyneside. An economic and Social Survey of Tyneside in the 1980s*, Newcastle: Newcastle upon Tyne City Libraries and Arts, 1988, p.126
- ¹¹² John Pendlebury, Tim Townshend and Rose Gilroy, Social Housing as Heritage: The Case of Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, paper presented at *Planning Research Conference*, Manchester 5-7 April 2005
- ¹¹³ Howard Caygill, op. cit, p.262
- ¹¹⁴ David Harvey's perceptive analysis of postmodern city-scapes suggests ways of reading the shape the Byker redevelopment project took. David Harvey, *The Condition of Post-Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, esp. ch.3 and 4.
- ¹¹⁵ Jan Gehl, Lars Gemzøe and Steen Holmgren, op. cit., p.45
- ¹¹⁶ Ralph Erskine, Foreword, in Jan Gehl, *Life between Buildings*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1987 (first publ. 1070)

Chapter 7

Conclusive remarks - Social Housing Provision in Århus and Newcastle before 1979: dimensions of democratic political culture in two urban social housing systems

Another lesson, very obvious to the traveller abroad, is the weakness in practice of the so-called 'garden-city' type of development. Whether these estates are outside Salzburg, Zürich, Amsterdam, Prague or London, the phrase is interpreted as an incitement to individualism in its rashest and least attractive form, although it is only fair to say that, however scattered these estates are abroad, they do include most income levels, most occupations. But in England we are cast-ridden to an extent undreamed of elsewhere; the classes are sorted out by our traditions and educational system according to income and occupation; increasingly they are being segregated in the new areas developed under the so-called 'Town Planning' Act, while the Housing Acts perpetuate the cleavage.....

This is not only anti-social, but also extremely dull, for every community should contain within itself as many occupations and interests as possible, including the semi-agricultural element which comes from retaining small-holdings and allotments within or near the city. In the opinion of the writer the equality of opportunity, the real democracy in Scandinavian countries is more likely to produce lovely cities, greater diversity of life, more happiness, more beautiful products and greater prosperity than this class-division we are pursuing in Great Britain.

Elizabeth Denby, *Europe Re-housed*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938, p.264-265

As a tourist there is always the danger I will become dewy-eyed about Danish associational life.

Rod Rhodes, *Understanding Governance: Comparing public sector reform in Britain and Denmark*, Working Paper, Demokratiprojektet, Cph.: University of Copenhagen (Institut for Statsvidenskab), 1999, p.44

A comparison of two cities, or nation states, may create much affective reflection that requires consideration. The present thesis has studied aspects of the local histories of the cities of Århus in Denmark and Newcastle in England by developing the history of twentieth century social housing within the two municipalities, but in doing so the problem of judging merits of each case is almost unavoidable. It is the role of the comparative historian to wipe away the dew blurring the historical vision and look at what each case contributed to the histories of their locality and the social life of their residents - and then consider this in the light of a juxtaposition of the two cases. National histories of

European housing systems have in the main been keen to stress similarities and convergences, or on the other hand consider different typologies of housing provision - albeit placing the British council housing system as a specific variation within state funded housing. Since the present work has studied the social housing of two cities with the aim of greater understanding, or *Verstehen*, of their complexities, the consequences of the council housing system becomes implicated in the wider history of urban management and administration. Questions have been raised based on equivalences in both cities, such as the existence of social housing and the quest to plan a degree of 'democratic happiness' through social housing systems. The comparison then moved on to study the specific local conditions pertaining to the object of study, continuously weighing the relative merits of using Århus and Newcastle as balanced cases.¹ It was suggested in chapter one that the origins of historiographies of housing in the two countries broadly differed. But nevertheless, by moving into the local setting, and by investigating local primary historical sources an attempt has been made to overcome this. This chapter will consider a series of questions that have arisen in the process of unearthing a comparative narrative of the two cities. It comments on the comparative literature in housing studies that has specifically included Denmark and Britain. It also reflects on elements of the comparative approach that have been unearthed in exploring the theme.

Comparative historians are highly conscious of the constructed nature of comparative work.² A burgeoning literature on comparative approaches in history has developed and historical research centres for comparative historical research have been established, especially in the central European countries. A professional debate and widening of the comparative discourse to include perspectives on exchanges and transfer is currently expanding.³ Thus in the thesis here allusions to travel and the broadening of interests from within professional circles of housing providers in Århus and Newcastle have also been made. The first section of this chapter will therefore examine evidence of such transfer efforts and consider the value of this to the history of social housing, while the second section will in conclusion adopt a wider perspective of the thesis that is in the main dominated by a more 'traditional' comparative perspective. Housing administration did not exist in isolation of wider social housing activities taking place throughout Europe or across the Atlantic as the thesis has implied. The present chapter will therefore examine issues arising from a comparison of Århus and Newcastle that seem pertinent for future research on transfer history. It is in the nature of comparative and transfer studies that they

feed into notions of professional reflexivity within academic scholarship, not just within the sphere of social history, but in the field of housing studies, to which will be returned later in the chapter.

I.

On the issue of cultural exchange - Local attitudes to study visits

The chapter will in section II focus on the running threads of the historical comparison of the thesis overall: the notion of democratic culture in Århus and Newcastle seen through the perspective of social housing provision. It could however be suggested that narrowing the study to two distinct cities incurs a significant shortcoming. This section will raise questions that may only be partially answered here, but which may give rise to future perspectives or widening lines of enquiry that would be of value to social histories of social housing, that would otherwise be comparative.

By analysing Århus and Newcastle's individual particularities the comparative study isolates unique factors and emphasises divergent urban particularities, in an analogous manner to many national comparative histories, which for this reason have been subject to criticism.⁴ The concept of cultural transfer and exchange that has arisen in Franco-Germanic historical studies is a useful way of looking beyond the purely contrastive or unifying types of comparison. Although transfer and communication of knowledge and culture have been studied in the past, shifts in perspective are adding new research perspectives for comparativists and transfer historians.⁵

Cultural units of comparison do not exist isolated from each other. Mutual interrelatedness and exchange with other societies were instrumental in the formation of modernising European cultures such as those of Britain and Denmark.⁶ Much of the primary and secondary literature used as sources in the present thesis reveal strong cross-cultural currents of ideas. While debates on and empirical studies of cultural transfer have commonly looked at the exchange between two entities over time, it has been suggested that studies of exchange processes between several nodal points strategically exploring moments of interaction, can look beyond the limitations of closed-off cases in historical comparison.⁷ Internationalising organisations such as the International Federation of Housing and Town Planning or international municipal associations have historically aspired to make connections and facilitated professional exchange for example – although

this was less to be the case in either Århus or Newcastle.⁸ A study of the appropriation of European welfare ideas, practices and models by North American writers on planning social affairs, such as Lewis Mumford and Catherine Bauer, suggests the historically specific movement of a trans-Atlantic information flow.⁹ In terms of domestic architecture moreover, the ideals of the British garden city movement and the neighbourhood unit concept featured prominently during the early part of the twentieth century, affecting domestic house building strategies across Europe, as the quote by Elizabeth Denby cited at the start of the chapter makes clear. And so the utopian garden city notion may have been present both in Newcastle and Århus, yet their physical manifestations arose from diverging, local and structural organisational and interpretive contexts that were described in chapter two.¹⁰ Much could be gained from focused and systematic studies on the junctures of cultural transfer and exchange in the social history of housing: what for example underpinned the desire for seeking new impulses abroad - what were the interpretive transformations of the cultural products of the other culture in the home setting?¹¹

From within contemporary discussions on the comparative orientation in housing studies solutions to problems in the 'home' country are sometimes sought, which can be policy or practice orientated. An important point in relation to such contemporary policy or practice transfer questions has been highlighted by Michael Oxley in his observation that 'a major omission of such studies is, ... a thorough analysis of the extent to which transfer is likely to work.'¹² Little research has been undertaken on how policy comparisons have been employed once researchers have returned from studying abroad. Furthermore, of interest to the historian are the uses of such comparative knowledge over time. Certain professional and civic groups invested time and resources to travel and learn from practices taking place elsewhere: how did policy makers, intellectuals, architects and local authority decision makers employ the knowledge they gained from travel abroad, or from receiving discipline-specific reports and articles on activities and research overseas? Did they create sustainable networks, successful town-twinning schemes or were their visits one-off trips, and is this an important distinction to consider in the study of their subsequent return?

It is such questions that could help illuminate historical studies of policy transfer. During the interwar years the British government received comparative reports to illuminate

social housing solutions on the continent.¹³ Unfortunately little commentary has so far been found on the housing statistics produced in them, and it is therefore not always clear how committees or civil servants deployed the reports. However some reports included observational narratives by municipal officers that throw light on their reflections on housing overseas developments. The sites of social housing that were commonly studied were the well-known social housing schemes in Amsterdam, Vienna and Berlin. The comparative study by Elizabeth Denby, *Europe Re-housed*, concluded that such schemes were in many cases exemplary. Denby's interests covered both the improvement of the material culture of domestic living, as well as social reform as the quote at the start makes clear. Britain could learn a great deal from Europe, both in terms of housing policy, but also from the exemplars of domestic housing she visited, such as Karl Marx Hof in Vienna.¹⁴

British architects before and after the Second World War were interested in the built form of European cities as has been shown in the architectural history on the dissemination of Modern Movement ideas.¹⁵ Some architects, such as Ian Bowen, sought to influence British housing policy and housing administration, through his admiring reports on the Danish housing association system to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (see chapter 3).¹⁶ Much of the British architectural literature in the post-war period was based on reviews of contemporary Modernist projects abroad, often implicitly feeding into a popular discourse through exhibitions and publications, as was shown in chapter 4 - while the reverse process was equally significant: Anglophile Danish architects studied historical plans for London's urban design (especially Georgian squares), which fed into Danish notions of socially connected town living.¹⁷ However a study of transfer should not focus solely on issues of 'influence,' but also take into consideration the value given to the transfer process itself, as well as how it was applied to local policy within a historical temporal framework.

The value of travel for social housing providers

Århus

From the previous chapters it seems to have been an accepted that housing providers would seek inspiration and ideas from abroad. From across Århus social housing associations and their architects visited new social housing areas in Copenhagen or abroad. By contrast Newcastle's civic Officers and Councillors also had opportunity to

travel to international conferences, but were inhibited by financial constraints, discussed below.

Thus The Society for Construction Interests in Århus (est. 1916) (*Foreningen af Byggeinteresserede i Århus*) illustrates the professional desire to learn through travel. Its purpose was to advance construction in the city by the private sector. As part of its professional learning process it organised visits to cities abroad as well as lectures on construction matters locally. After 1945 Århusian councillors, Civic Officers and social housing representatives travelled with the Society to cities across Europe.¹⁸ These annual visits took the Society to sites of urban reconstruction and well-known contemporary housing areas such as Gothenburg (1951, to see *Guldheden* a suburban housing complex attracting much attention as a functionalist neighbourhood unit), Hamburg (1952), Amsterdam and Rotterdam (1953 and 1962), Stockholm (1955), Vienna (1957), Frankfurt (1959), Berlin (1958 and 1965) and Helsingfors (1960); although by the mid-1960s the society's visits ended. Housing association leaders and parish councillors also sought inspiration abroad, and their occasional reports on study visits show how keen Committee members were to learn from new urban developments, such as the British New Towns and the re-construction of Coventry.¹⁹ Yet the educational dimension was not the only advantage of travel. A society such as *The Society for Construction Interests in Århus* formed by local building interests for example created a forum where builders, architects, administrators and Council officials could meet and exchange ideas, suggesting a degree of professional and technocratic exclusivity. Bearing in mind that most of the Society's members were master builders and construction entrepreneurs this is not surprising. The Society thus provided an important shared discursive space within Århus, creating a sense of community between the various building interests in the city.²⁰

Others, more politically inclined travelled to the Soviet Union to study collective housing and amenity provision.²¹ Århus Council's Housing Development Committee (*Udvalget til undersøgelse af bygge- og boligforhold*) for example travelled to Hamburg to study the German experience of industrial housing systems. It particularly admired a tower block estate, although the Committee evaluated the area through the filter of Danish design standards suggesting that some fittings and installations were inferior to Danish standards, and balconies, colour and flowers would have softened the uniformity of the area.²² The Committee worried that such areas would rapidly become slums when compared with

Danish or pre-war national-socialist domestic architecture.²³ Thus the issues gleaned from these visits were at least superficially concerned with technical matters. Yet it is possible that wider cultural issues relating to the sense of neighbourhood and community formation, and reflections on their adoption in a Danish context would have interested the visitors equally, informed as they were by Anglo-American town planning theory such as that of Lewis Mumford.

The geographical position of Århus affected the choices of destinations: Impressions gained abroad affected the sense of self-identity, confirming and adjusting in turn notions of one's own culture. Århus was ideally located to enable Continental travel as Jutland was land-bound with Germany, while the cognitive map of Scandinavia ensured that Sweden seemed near enough to visit. While seeking out material visions of modern urban reconstruction, and the possibilities of new materials/techniques, the visits abroad also signalled a degree of openness to new ideas by local private or public developers.

A comparison of the interest in foreign developments, or the possibilities for travel, raises another important point for the thesis as a whole. There seems to be no evidence that there was popular knowledge of the study visits in Århus. Århusian construction interests revealed a corporate forum that seemed out of reach of the public gaze, which confirms the overriding private interests of the Society. But the international study visits also informed the Council's and social housing associations' plans for the city's housing areas and thus were probably seen as integral to public decision making processes. Issues of accountability were problematic, for little public justification seemed to be needed, and few written reports made by housing associations appear to have survived. Only at end of the 1960s, with the advent of increasingly vocal residents' representatives did it become apparent that international study tours would need to be justified against the benefits that were claimed for them.²⁴

Newcastle Council's ambivalence towards travel – resistance and activities

Important international modern developments also tempted Newcastle Council officials to go abroad, but here there were severe curtailments to international study visits. In the 1930s Housing Committee Chairs and the City Architect had occasionally attended International Housing and Town Planning Congresses, but visits ceased during wartime.²⁵ With peacetime it again became possible to enlighten staff and councillors on professional

developments and municipal activity. However certain limitations mitigated against the benefits of educational travel within the municipality. Firstly, several municipal departments competed for funds to enable attendance at professional conferences. During periods of austerity the Ministry of Health contended that only a small number of officials should attend a reduced number of visits.²⁶ In the early post-war years conferences of special interest were therefore not systematically considered, and each administrative department requested permission to send representatives in a piecemeal fashion. Nevertheless each year during the late 1940s the Housing Committee requested permission to send the Chief Architect to the Annual RIBA conference. Until 1951 it was common to support his trip, but by 1952 it was made clear that no funding would be made available for highly technical conferences that concerned the individual's professional training.²⁷

Despite the argument that the professional exchange of new ideas was valuable for the future of the local authority, especially since conference themes related directly to housing and estate development, costly travel was criticised for taking no account of ratepayer's interests.²⁸ Eventually therefore, acceptable conferences were stipulated that could legitimately be attended. Being affiliated to the Institute of Housing the members from the Housing Management Committee attended sessions there, while the Council was represented at important conferences on housing and slum clearance held by the Association of Municipal Corporations.²⁹

A second limitation to travel was the rejection on socio-cultural grounds of costly travel. When it came to travel abroad the objections not only included the usual problem of accountability to ratepayers. Something that resembled a mental barrier arose against the idea of travelling across the Channel. 1950 was the year of an *International Housing and Town Planning Congress* held in Amsterdam. The Housing Committee defensively justified the proposal: if such an event were held in Britain there would be no hindrance to attending. Benefits included broadening the mind by 'appreciating' developments abroad.³⁰ Again the accountability to ratepayers surfaced in opposition to the proposal. Costs could not be defended in the face of acute housing shortage at home. A facetious swipe by a Labour councillor was made at the international venue:

Incidentally, I have heard Amsterdam mentioned quite a lot recently by people on the waiting list for houses, one of whom said “ ‘Aam-so-damn’ sick of waiting for a house.” I was wondering whether we might take this a step further by considering whether all the Progressive members of the Housing Committee should go to Amsterdam and extend their visit to six months to study development.³¹

This speaker thought sufficient new British housing projects at home would inform national practice; indeed other countries came to Britain to study housing. Labour Party resistance to foreign study argued for the need to improve housing at home first. The argument was reasonable in the light of actual housing need, yet the rhetoric employed against the visit betrayed a parochial attitude that prioritised the local over the national, and the national over the international (as a last resort) without acknowledging possible educational gains. One Councillor reinforced this position when he claimed not to have learnt anything at conferences that could usefully be applied in Newcastle.³²

That a civic delegation from the Council, now controlled by Labour, later in the decade travelled to Århus possibly signals a turn of mind that by now was more open to impulses abroad. Yet maybe it was the honour of the invitation that attracted equally. A rare glimpse of the comparative dimension of the visit was noted within the Council that has equally been considered in this thesis.³³ The visit to Århus revealed that the Danish city had a different administrative structure to Newcastle's, especially the organisation of the Århusian municipal administration was summarised as the key difference with Newcastle. Despite hopes for a programme of work exchange for public officials that could have prolonged the civic relationship, this was never implemented.

The interest in internationalising civic connections seemed indeed limited. In the 1960s the issues of town twinning arose as an issue for the Public Relations Committee to consider. It was passed over at several meetings and when eventually the Committee turned to Århus as its first connection, recalling the earlier invitation in 1959, the mayor of Århus, Bernhard Jensen, rejected the invitation. Århus had by then turned its attention to its Nordic neighbours.³⁴ At the same time, as Newcastle's political leaders sought to regenerate their city as a regional capital during the 1960s, through system building and complex road networks and presenting the city as a centre of industrial progress, T. Dan Smith imagined that Scandinavian design culture would be the force that would provide a polished face for the city.³⁵ He funded a personal visit to Copenhagen to establish contact

with the internationally recognised architect, Arne Jacobsen; and sent his vision of a redeveloped city centre to international exhibitions during the 1960s. In Newcastle, the Scandinavian connection was symbolically embodied in a sculpture of five flying swans, a centrepiece for a fountain located within the walled square of the Civic Centre.³⁶

Now in power the Labour Party in Newcastle shifted in its position on study visits. Between 1963 and 1967 the Town Planning visited development sites within Britain and abroad, such as London, Stockholm, and Coventry (in 1962 alone it visited 5 cities including Rotterdam, Brussels, Hanover, Cologne and Düsseldorf) to study highway and redevelopment projects.³⁷ Furthermore the Public Relations Committee had taken a three-dimensional model of Newcastle city centre to Oslo (1966) and Århus (1964).³⁸ Finally a study visit to the city region of Los Angeles in 1967 reported with admiration on the use of computerisation of planning administration.

It is therefore clear that a great deal of travel was taking place once a focused vision of urban development was in place. How these visits left an imprint on the city is a question for further research. Visits were rarely reported on in full, possibly rather seen as an implicit means to inform professional policy delivery.³⁹

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Thus, due to the dearth in study activity and hence documentation, the researcher interested in a wider exploration of cultural exchange in the cases of Århus and Newcastle would find only limited relevant material in the two cities. However the suggestion of travel in the two cities, the movement between a tentative interest and a more committed impulse to learn from abroad, opens a gap in the wholly juxtapositional comparison and provides glimpses of additional layers of insight to be gleaned from within the comparative cases.

This sketchy outline of a possible line of historical enquiry therefore, allows both for the comparison of values towards travel in the first instance, and could, with deeper investigation, allow for a greater understanding of the cross-European municipal networks that were appearing throughout the post-war period. The history of housing as an international phenomenon beyond, but including, the architectural sphere would take into account the changes in practice that were affected by larger processes. This would

overcome the limitations of a pure comparison, and could indicate in how far welfare societies appropriated, adopted and shared impulses from abroad.

II.

Concluding considerations

The role of the housing association as a divergent factor in the comparison

Moving away from a detailed, if somewhat partial, exploration of cultural and policy transfer in the two cities this second section will now turn to key themes arising in the thesis and their location in the context of the discourse of historical social housing studies. The thesis has studied the history of social housing at the urban level, considering specific aspects of the municipal city life of two Northern European cities. Their individual specificities have been examined at a level of detail that national housing studies would be unable to consider. It has nonetheless attempted to avoid essentialising notions of the two housing systems when considering cultural phenomena embedded in the housing systems. However it is suggested here that once research for the comparison was underway its conclusions arose in dialogue with the wider national histories of the broad contexts of the cases, and generalisable notions may in this way appear.

The urban focus of only two cases seem in this way to confirm generalised positions, which through closer study become problematised with the introduction of a different level and choice of detail. The general conclusions reached by housing historians such as Michael Harloe on the development of post-war housing in Western capitalist nations for example could have been confirmed by the local history of the two cities. Indeed his suggestion that mass provision of social housing in Europe was sluggish due to the cost of materials and shortage in skilled staff is confirmed by this study of Århus and Newcastle, while his conclusions on the interwar 'models' of social housing equally seem to echo themes covered in the present study.⁴⁰ The shift in Britain from a 'commercial' relationship between a social landlord and their tenants in the 1920s towards a residual council management structure in the 1930s, saw housing management shaped as a detached and distanced service. The origins of social reform and education were thinned out, albeit the present study has suggested such practices were still evoked by Newcastle Council throughout its post-war Housing Management Committee. On the other hand, when Harloe seems to regret the lost chance of the workers' co-operative model to be a substantial and 'radical' alternative housing strategy he dismisses the model outright as an

element in his comparison. This leads him to make general conclusions across the history of housing in Western capitalist nations, including the Danish case - although he sees remnants of the system in play in Denmark still. On the whole the 1930s became the point at which the hegemony of reformist housing strategies residualised social housing further, a process workers' co-operative housing projects un-wittingly collaborated in:

A little simplistically,... if the workers' cooperative model was compatible with a wider project of autonomous working-class cultural, political and economic institutions, whose long-term objective was to contribute to a socialist transformation of society, this third model aimed rather to integrate tenants who were conceived as being on the margins of capitalist society into that society.⁴¹

Harloe's notion of co-operative housing associations as co-opting and incorporating tenants sees the state machine as absorbing and reproducing systems of social housing (and by extension social reproduction) that leads to a comparative conclusion that converges housing systems such as the Danish and the British. He rejects 'elevating them [housing associations] to a privileged theoretical status.' His comparative approach instead aims to seek out large-scale explanatory patterns.⁴² This therefore leads him to conclude that social housing systems in the five countries in his study comply with a universalising tendency.⁴³ When the mediating instance of housing associations is taken out of the equation in a comparison between Danish and English social housing provisions a converging conclusion is achievable.

However it is the existence of social housing associations as a variable with cultural and social implications at the local level that signifies difference in the present comparison. It is this difference that interested Anne Power in her study of the administration of social housing, interpreted as a defining characteristic of the Scandinavian housing system.⁴⁴ The structural constitution of housing associations ensured the decentralisation of housing management from their beginnings, albeit this was affected by turns in national housing policy aimed at greater planning and mass building projects later in the twentieth century. But at the time when these projects were arising during the 1960s the housing association movement was also becoming aware of a need to enhance the democratic capacity of their structure and by 1970 this became a statutory requirement. Throughout the period however, the discourse and self-identity of social housing associations in general seemed to find affirmation in the working class origins of self-help, despite the ebbs and flows of changing notions of participation.

The council housing management system in Newcastle on the other hand, albeit attempting a fair and balanced allocation and building policy was less likely to have the democratic potential that may have been wished for it immediately after the Second World War. Although the Labour Party argued persuasively for housing for the labouring classes and the poor throughout the period, the Council's autonomy was to some extent determined by the vagaries of national housing. Council housing was seen as a state-to-local authority entity and in Newcastle any third sector beyond local authority and private housing provision was rejected. This led to a strongly centralised provision from within the Council, a bureaucratic approach to management and a distance from tenants that led to mis-trust on both the sides, between the social housing provider and its tenants. The scale of its housing provision grew, the number of council houses provided across the city in comparison with Århus housing stock held by housing associations contrasted greatly.

On the other hand, there is little indication that Århusian social housing associations intended to be 'radical' in Harloe's sense. They were rather an integral part of social democratic reformist efforts. Although the city's labour organisations were a driving force in setting up housing associations they do not appear to have set out to oppose or resist the given system, but worked within a democratic process that was seen as a way to achieve a more egalitarian social structure. This culture of political compromise and negotiation mutually linking a multi-party system, employers and the Labour movement constituted elements of Danish political culture during long periods of the twentieth century.⁴⁵ Interwar Danish social democracy acknowledged its dependency on an urban bourgeois and a smallholders' electorate and therefore accepted pragmatic compromise as a means to maintain a wide electoral base.⁴⁶ By taking a large-scale view Harloe is unable to consider the cultural impact of the co-operative social housing model. The present study on the other hand considers the cultural perspective to be significant in the context of local politics of social housing. The continuing leading presence of social democracy in Århus, its pre-war force in building welfare and housing through local municipal collaborative socialism, as well as its more vulnerable condition in the post-war period, confirms the role of social democratic culture in the social housing of Århus at least until the 1970s.⁴⁷

In Århus the self-perception of housing associations as autonomous, hard working organisations building on behalf of the city's residents and making a significant impact on the city's material culture is significant. The continuity of leadership and management

approaches within each housing association, much of which was social democratic at its core, meant that social equality within social housing provision was on the whole sought built on democratic foundations. Thus, when Anne Power studied the Danish case her sources ensured that she became informed about the cultural background to the Danish co-operative housing tradition.⁴⁸

Powers' study selected the administrative strategies as well as the general national questions of housing policy in order to reflect on issues pertinent for policy transfer. One of her concerns was the administration of housing management. Her conclusions on British social housing management perceived this to be lacking an over-all regulatory framework, unlike other welfare provisions, leaving local authorities to define their housing services independently.⁴⁹ In Newcastle this was also the case. Its housing management during the 1950s and 1960s revealed its ambivalent position as a large centralised social landlord and housing welfare provider, a role dependent on the vagaries of changes in the political orientation of Council leadership.

The social history of housing – or housing history?

The discourse of housing studies at times employs historical methods, while social histories of housing would find it hard to develop fruitfully without the insights of the multiple threads of work explored by housing studies. A suggestion has recently been submitted for introducing theoretically informed historical research methods within the field of housing studies.⁵⁰ The benefits of historical work include opening up research trajectories that have not been explored in housing studies hitherto - patterns of development can be revealed that can be evaluated for their long-term and short-term repercussions across a variety of social structures.⁵¹ The historical study of housing policies, practices and the social relationships of actors in housing can deepen an understanding of the constructed nature of the housing discourse. However, it has also been suggested that some historical research projects on housing, including Michael Harloe's and Anne Power's writings, have been used to make predictions on future housing developments that have since been shown to be redundant in the face of actual shifts in housing policy.⁵²

It is interesting that the discipline of history is now explicitly called upon as a resource within the field of housing studies. It introduces a more fluid movement of historical

knowledge into the interdisciplinary field of housing studies, which also incorporates cultural studies and literary approaches within its remit.⁵³ Housing studies and the social history of housing have been in dialogue for some time in any case, and the division should not be made overly distinct.⁵⁴ Similar to the debate on the distinction between the historical comparison and the comparative work of historical sociology, it is clear that the boundaries are fluid.⁵⁵ This thesis contributes to the burgeoning literature of comparative housing studies, albeit anchored in the local histories of Århus and Newcastle. As a comparative historical work the thesis has used a social historical narrative to enhance understanding or *Verstehen*.

This has in the present study allowed the local as well as the comparative dimensions to reflect on each other, each chapter absorbing issues of urban history, housing policy and cultural representations or activities deployed by the housing authorities in the two cities. There is little place in this thesis to consider the political science and social administrative issues that have arisen in the wake of recent changes in the status of social housing associations in Britain, with their interest in local participation – this issue would require a separate study. The periodisation of the study, ending in 1979, is intended to indicate that a study of the last 25 years of the history of housing in the two countries requires a detailed analysis in its own right: the neo-liberal attack on welfare provision that has seen council housing in Britain being sold off, has recently been proposed replicated in Denmark, as the liberal government merged the Ministry of Housing with the Directorate of Trade in 2001 (now The Trade and Building directorate) and in 2003 put forward a proposal to sell off housing previously managed by housing associations.⁵⁶

Instead, however, it is worth considering how the urban history of social housing contributes to the wider discourse of housing history, and consider whether the claims that a cultural dimension of the local politics of social housing contributes to its further historical study. Chapter 4 shows how a series of cultural practices in each city were used to convey certain meanings about social housing to a post-war urban audience - in other chapters certain strategies taken by social housing providers are shown to reflect elements of local political culture. In the process the thesis suggests that particular approaches to the notion of democracy was aimed for in Århus and Newcastle, and that democracy was a somewhat opaque notion at times – it needed to be constructed anew over time. Different actors appropriated the democratic housing message in different ways. Housing authorities

were actively employing cultural practices in their management of social housing, while the political culture of the city's government was contingent upon the organisation of the structures of social housing. Democracy was evoked in calls for participation by the recipients of publicly funded housing services, or was formulated as an explicit policy for administering local social housing areas in particular ways. In this way the history of the social housing here shows the changing meanings within the political culture of housing in Århus and Newcastle.

Setting out on the paths for social housing development

The middle-level view of the housing authorities' attempts at conveying and providing efficient and ethically meaningful housing that has been adopted by the current thesis is an important level of perspective. The notions of democracy employed at this level have in this connection been shown to change over time, in relation to views of democratic culture from a history of institutional and organizational culture and shared social experience. Thus cultural historians have explained the ambitions for home-ownership in Denmark in terms of the history of late peasant migration to cities.⁵⁷ The culture of ownership it is suggested, originated from within earlier farmers' and small-holders' cultures. It has been suggested that liberal agrarian ideologies, that also incorporated the democratic principles originating in a Danish people's enlightenment programme from the Folk High School (*Folkehøjskole*) movement and the farmers' co-operative tradition, have resulted in the pervasive hegemony of Danish rural cultures translated into a sense of individualistic territorial homeownership.⁵⁸

However such a claim requires further scrutiny. It would seem from the present work that the explanation that the cultural implications of the late nineteenth century farmers' movements could equally explain the origins of Danish social housing associations. Housing associations have employed a discourse of social solidarity and collective ownership throughout the twentieth century, equally echoing the co-operative principles of agrarian production and consumer co-operatives. British visitors studying the 'smaller democracies' such as Denmark in the 1930s noted that the ethics of hard work and a sense of co-ownership in co-operative organisations created an 'equalitarian' system.⁵⁹ The thesis has shown that the self-understanding of the leadership of social housing associations in Århus was dominated by a perception of voluntary hard work for the good of all residents and members within an association. This message was conveyed through

the popularization of the housing cause. The notion of citizenship in the housing movement was closely linked to a sense of social equality and solidarity, which was reiterated to varying degrees throughout the Århusian social housing discourse. Social housing associations were a means of inserting a pre-existing principle of participatory democracy into the local urban housing system, by a working class community still steeped in their rural past during the first half of the twentieth century.

The thesis has examined the origins of social housing in Århus and Newcastle and the consequences of these early choices in as far as they affected notions of local democratic culture within local social housing systems. The acceptance of a need for social housing existed in both cities as chapter 2 has described. It is clear that the Council in Newcastle was from the outset expected to be the main provider of housing when the market failed. There was little incentive subsequently to introduce alternative means of housing provision in Newcastle, indeed as the Council became more powerful in its management of social housing, it resisted any alternatives, in the process reiterating and naturalising its unique function as provider. In Århus the opposite was the case. Local municipal socialism in the city endorsed a collaborative relationship with co-operative housing associations founded on principles of self-help from the 1930s. Its politics were pragmatic rather than founded on theoretical motives and early Århusian social housing solutions should probably be seen less as a fully conceived strategy for the future, than as a result of municipal efforts to work with existing housing interests in the city. It actively organised and initiated the fledgling housing solutions that were later adopted and adapted by national housing policy. The founding choices of the two local authorities provided the divergent developments of their social housing strategies for the twentieth century, the path dependent routes of their housing trajectories. The culture of democracy embedded in the social housing associations in Århus had no equivalent in Newcastle, where activities in civil society, in gardening societies, sports clubs and tenants' associations were to develop independently and precariously, outside the remit of the Council.

Thus the socio-cultural aspects of the local politics of social housing identified in the comparison supports Rod Rhodes' broad distinctions between Danish and British 'political traditions.'⁶⁰ According to Rhodes Danish political culture is revealed through a high degree of organization within a decentralized associational life. By contrast, the British case suggests that strong local government set the rules by which housing was

managed, however ambiguous those rules at times turned out to be. Working class requests for centrally managed housing provision and its subsequent removal from the management process, affected the relationship between the Council as landlord and tenants as dependants on its service as considered in chapter three.⁶¹ Principles of designing and planning the urban environment in Newcastle were based on ideals carried through from middle class social reform efforts, model villages, garden cities and city planning. Newcastle Council relied on the strong working relationship between itself and its civic officers - technocratic expert planners and professional housing intermediaries. Its attempts to manage and contain the level of participation with tenants were challenged later in the century, when its paternalistic management system became of questionable value as it was confronted by demands for direct democratic influence by housing activists. Here the old working class self-conception met the new challenges of the discontinuities of late industrial society towards the end of the 1960s. The case of Byker can be read through a history of local governmental politics of the 1970s, or it can become a site for the understanding of what happened when 'industrial cultures' – residual and emergent – impinged on a locality, revealing ambivalences towards the established political culture of housing both from within dominant groups and from below.⁶²

Shared trajectories

Nevertheless, in terms of post-war social housing provision and urban planning, the two cities also underwent many similar phases of development. Post-war planning in Århus and Newcastle shared the modernist community planning ideals that shaped the urban environment. The key objective being an integrated, urban plan, designed around the neighbourhood unit, or local urban centres, with new housing constructed to nurture health and social well-being. Supportive clientilism provided the basis for such activities in both cities. Post-war housing construction thus aimed to create as many housing units as possible to avert the social problems that lingered, as long as emergency housing in the case of Århus and overcrowding in Newcastle continued until the 1960s and 1970s. But the actors in the two housing systems held different perceptions of how to enable a popular appreciation of the housing problem. The long-term continuity and stability of the social democratic municipality in Århus, the similar long-term commitment of the housing association leadership, and the additional bonds between the two organisational forms led to a consensus approach to local housing provision.

Part of the Danish culture of the ‘people’s government’ (*fokestyre*) included a commitment to popular information and education dissemination (enlightenment – or *oplysning*). In order to encourage popular engagement with the political intention underpinning mass housing provision during the 1950s, the promotional campaigns of housing associations and the Århus Council promoted the structures of provision and the architectural design of domestic architecture as was seen in chapter 4. In contrast Newcastle Council did not facilitate comprehensive information dissemination until the 1960s, when it employed popular means of communication, such as the illustrated newsletters and show homes, as a part of its housing policy. Reconciling the distance between the managers and administrators, and the residents and tenants of social housing in both Århus and Newcastle was especially in the 1960s becoming an area of importance as the scales of mass housing construction grew. The shift towards marketing style applications to communication rose, in both the case of Århus and Newcastle, due in part to increases in entrepreneurial culture, that was beginning to creep into housing authority practices.

One reason for including a discussion of promotional devices in social housing in the thesis is the problem of its invisibility in the history of housing. The promotion of modern urban policies has been taken for granted as the voice of the politically dominant, the hegemonic visual culture that was created to underpin policy statements was the route to a popular audience.⁶³ But those groups in the urban public sphere who vocalised their housing rights in the face of policies that were challenging their residential status also deployed promotional and persuasive devices to articulate their position. The education, the training and the encouragement of residents to engage actively in their housing areas have concerned various groupings, from Marxist inspired grass roots movements in both cities, to the more institutionalised interests of Danish social housing associations determined to create a growing sensitivity towards the institutionalised democratic process. In the early 1970s, as resident democracy was being made official national policy in Danish social housing associations, small clusters of grass root activists in Århus and Newcastle were protesting at what they perceived as socially unjust housing policies. These groups, along with women’s organisations and other radical social movements on the left, had lasting influence on later political decision making.⁶⁴ As chapter five suggests, ideals of democracy and citizenship were shifting.

Local working class communities were changing, the urban fabric was being ripped up and questions of what would replace it created tensions. Unemployment and economic crisis in general created a situation where historical continuities were disrupted.

Newcastle's de-industrialisation was leading to changes in its social base, Århus was becoming a significant centre for education and services, changing the city's demographic base in older working class areas. Ideas about the right to a voice as well as the right to social provisions revealed a different conception of democracy to an institutionally organised democratic system. No longer were welfare state provisions through bodies such as social housing associations perceived to adequately take into account the diversity of local housing needs, as the legacy of Gellerupparken shows. But the negotiated space of participatory housing projects such as Byker also showed contradictions inherent in the meeting of representative democratic institutions such as Newcastle Council and the active participation by tenants. In both Århus and Newcastle the idea of the inviolable privacy of home was sought protected by residents and housing providers alike. But there were also individuals for whom their wider physical and social environment meant more than what they could see when they peered out through their living room window. How the public meeting places between official providers and the public was organised shared many features across the two cities. Why only few entered into this public space of participation in both cities is a question that requires careful study elsewhere.

The present thesis creates a juxtapositional framework through its structuring of Århus' and Newcastle's housing histories. It has suggested the social dimension of certain constructs such as the socio-political meaning of the housing association in both cities. The thesis attempts to overcome the problem of pure juxtaposition by examining the comparative implications of the themes chosen, but nevertheless includes detail at a level sufficient to support a multi-dimensional reading of the politico-cultural nature of the two local housing systems. It was stated from the outset of the thesis that its approach was to understand the historical housing issues in the urban contexts of Århus and Newcastle and it has sought to contribute to the social histories of each city individually as well as informing their separate situations through a comparative analysis. The comparison seems nevertheless to have drawn out certain similarities – or rather equivalences. Yet as has been described above, the conceptual apparatus for self-understanding within the cities' housing authorities remained the distinguishing factors that set the two housing systems on their individual historical paths. The thesis therefore also contributes to a history of the

nature of the political cultures of the two cities as well as an understanding of their individual social housing conditions.⁶⁵

Conclusion

The thesis has suggested that the differences between social housing provision in Århus and Newcastle arose from the paths towards social housing each city followed. The comparison has suggested that the differences in the cultural practices of the social housing in the two cities overrode the similarities. It suggests that in the Danish case social housing providers did more than just build houses and flats - they sought to participate in the creation of an integrated cultural system within social housing areas. Their position in relation to the state, their critical stance towards private speculation and their ambitions to support a particular democratic way of life in their housing areas challenged and was challenged by changes in post-war Århusian society. In Newcastle council housing was less in the position to work in this way. The ambivalent position of council housing as a political tool, its centralised management and professionalised, bureaucratic nature expressed its relationship to democratic culture less as an integrated way of life than as an entity between private life and government by the state.

Despite such differences there were nevertheless a number of equivalences within the two comparative cases, such as the cities' adoption of a social housing systems, providing predominantly for the working class and poorer social groups, and the activities of residents and tenants that share similar resonances. However the structural constitution of local social housing providers absorbing the cultural inheritance of a differentiated Danish co-operative tradition in contrast to the strong British state-local government provider complex affected the different approaches to social housing by providers, and the qualitative experience of 'life between buildings.'⁶⁶

Thus the structure of housing provision in turn was also affected by changes in local political culture as the decades wore on. There had been a consensus in Århus about the collaborative relationship between the local authority, social housing associations and their members during the 1950s and into the 1960s. Yet by the early 1970s the notion that social housing was part of a Danish social democratic welfare project was challenged and questioned in Århus. Newcastle Council, with its varying political leaderships and its centralised government of council housing, at times displayed an explicitly entrepreneurial

stance that gives rise to questions of democratic accountability. Council housing was planned and built on a large scale to, at times, diminishing standards. Tenants seemed reduced to create their own forum for communicating with their council landlord. Despite professional ambitions of housing managers to consider tenant participation, the sluggishness of local authority bureaucracy to change was shown to be a hindrance in developing proactive communication.

Questions of participation, citizenship and democracy have in this way been the running threads throughout the thesis. The complexity involved in the democratisation processes in the twentieth century in two local urban societies have been shown to be integral to the Danish case and problematic in the British case. The comparison furthermore questions such comparative juxtapositions of urban conditions from a methodological view-point. The question of seeing cases in comparisons as isolated units ignores the interwoven nature of international transfer of knowledge and culture, which affected local developments. In the final count the thesis also suggests that a study of the interchange between professionals and civic leaders engaged in social housing provision would provide a valuable enhancement of the comparative approach, and that indeed the history of the use of comparisons for competition, self-understand or learning rationales in areas such as local authority policy making is in itself a topic integral to such a project.

¹ J. Kocka, *Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: the case of the German Sonderweg, History and Theory*, 1999, 38, p.49: 'Considering the degree to which nation-specific approaches dominate modern and contemporary history, there is much to recommend accepting the comparative perspective as a means of widening horizons, even where this is not accomplished in a balanced fashion, but only asymmetrically.'

² J. Kocka, speaks of the comparison as having an 'alienating effect,' see his *The Uses of Comparative History*, in R. Björk and Karl Molin, *Societies made up of History. Essays in historiography, intellectual history, professionalisation, historical social theory and proto-industrialisation*, Edsbruk: Akademi-tryck AB, 1996, p.201

³ Key academics in Germanic comparative history such as Jürgen Kocka and Hartmut Kaelble have been co-initiators of the Centre for Comparative History of Europe in Berlin, set up to promote the study of comparative identities, civil society and other related political and social history subjects. see <http://web.fu-berlin.de/zvge/frame/english.htm> - Furthermore a network has been established to consider subjects in cultural and social transfer with particular attention to the role of cities in internationalising processes, see the web-site for CITTA (Cities as International and Transnational Actors), <http://www.diesonline.it/citta-esf/index.php>

⁴ M. Espagne, and M. Werner, *La construction d'une référence culturelle Allemande en France genèse et histoire (1750-1914)*, *Annales ESR*, July-August 1987, 4; M. Espagne, *Sur les limites du comparatisme en histoire culturelle*, *Genèse* 17, Sept. 17, 1994, see also M. Wellskop, *Stolpersteine auf dem Königsweg. Methodenkritische Anmerkungen zum internationalen Vergleich in der Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 35 (1995)

⁵ Matthias Middell, *Kulturtransfer und Historische Komparatistik – Thesen zu ihrem Verhältnis*; see <http://www.passage-frankreich-sachsn.de/de/forschung/thesen.pdf> (originally appeared in *Comparativ*, 2000, 1)

⁶ See the collection of essays in J. Sevaldsen (ed.), *Britain and Denmark. Political, Economic and Cultural Relations in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Cph.: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2003. The collection covers considerations such as influence, exchange and mutual relationships.

⁷ Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, *Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the challenge of reflexivity*, *History and Theory*, 2006, 45, p.37-44

⁸ For a brief history of the more proactive urban internationalising groups concerned with sharing experiences on urban problems see Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Sketches from the Urban Internationale, 1910-50. Guardian Angels of the City: Voluntary Associations, International Institutions and US Philanthropy*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, June 2001, Vol. 25, (2). For a study of internationalising processes in a British municipal fire service see Shane Ewen, *The internationalization of fire protection: in pursuit of municipal networks in Edwardian Birmingham*, *Urban History*, 2005, 32, (2), p.288-307

⁹ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings. Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, Cambridge Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998

¹⁰ For the history of the Danish adoption of garden city ideas see Knud Bidstrup, *Ebenerzers disciple. Fra dansk byplanlægnings pionertid*, Cph.: Dansk Byplanlaboratorium, 1971

¹¹ Matthias Middell, *op. cit.*, p.12-18

¹² Oxley, *op. cit.*, p.98

¹³ PRO HLG 52/788 Committee on Flat Construction, John Wilson (Dept. of Health, Scotland), *Continental Housing*, PRO HLG 90/58 Report by Sheppard Fiddler on his visit to Scandinavia, 8-25/5 1949; PRO HGL/52/788 N.a., *Continental Housing Comparisons*, n.d.

¹⁴ E. Denby, *Europe Rehoused*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1938.

¹⁵ Peter Rowe, *Modernity and Housing*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995, ch. 2 and ch.3 in particular.

¹⁶ PRO HLG 90/58 Professor Ian Bowen, *Housing Policy in Denmark*, Appendix to Sheppard Fiddler, Chief Architect, Crawley DC), *Report on his visit to Scandinavia*, 8-25.05.49, also Ian Bowen, *Housing Policy in Denmark*, *The Architects' Journal*, August 4, 1949; N.M. Day cites the case of LCC architects travelling to France to study icons of modernist housing project in N.M. Day, *The Role of the Architect in Post-War State Housing. A case study of the housing work of the*

London County Council, 1939-1956, p.44-45, Unpublished Ph.D., Warwick University, 1983; M. Glendinning and S. Muthesius mention the admiration of Danish highrise housing by British housing administrators in their *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1996

¹⁷ Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *London the Unique City*, London: Pelican Book, 1960 (first published in 1937 it went through several editions).

¹⁸ Erhvervsarkivet, Archive: Foreningen af Byggeinteresserede i Århus. A series of travel programmes and articles on tours undertaken.

¹⁹ Holme-Tranbjerg Kommunalbestyrelse: *Rapport fra Holme-Tranbjerg Kommunalbestyrelses studietur til England, 12.07.63*

²⁰ Letter to a member of the Byggnadstekniska föreningen, 25.03.1953. Many of the society's members were also members of the local Rotary Club. Foreningen af Byggeinteresserede i Århus, Erhvervsarkivet.

²¹ The Chair of the Århusian AAB travelled in a party of 5 Communists, 9 social democrats and a single non-party representative to Moscow, *Land og Folk*, 13.02.1953

²² The aesthetics of Danish domestic architecture had included the balcony as an important stylistic device since the 1930s. See e.g. Knud Millech and Kay Fisker (eds.), *Danske Arkitekturstrømninger 1850-1950*, Cph.: Østifternes Kreditforening, 1951, p.333-335

²³ Erhvervsarkivet, Unmack Larsens Arkiv, Box 4, Udvalget til undersøgelse af bygge- og boligforhold, Report to Council 24.05.52

²⁴ A particularly strong case in point was Brabrand Boligforening, as was shown in chapter 4.

²⁵ NCCM 04.07.45

²⁶ NCCM 01.06.49

²⁷ Newcastle Council was not generally supportive of professional development of its architectural staff. See P. Malpass for consideration of the role of the professional architect in local authority employ. P. Malpass, Professionalism and the role of architects in local authority housing, *RIBA Journal*, June, 1975, p.18

²⁸ NCCM 19.05.52

²⁹ NCCM 17.12.52 and NCCM 18.03.53

³⁰ NCCM 28.06.50 Alderman Temple obtusely cited the philosopher Burke on combining learning and admiration for artists assumed to be great accomplishments of Western Civilisation – he was possibly trying to draw analogies between this need for learning of the Great Artists, and the need for the local authority to inform itself on international developments in urban reconstruction.

³¹ NCCM 28.06.50 Mr B.H. Russell

³² NCCM 28.06.1950 Mr Curry

³³ NCCM, 17.03.59

³⁴ MD/NC229/1+2, 09.09.1965, Public Relations Sub-Committee Minutes; NCCM, 09.09.65

³⁵ T. Dan Smith personally visited and persuaded Arne Jacobsen, the Danish architect of international renown to design a hotel on the site of Eldon Square (never completed), T.Dan Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography*, Newcastle: Oriel Press Ltd., 1970

³⁶ Although the Scandinavian connection leant heavily towards Norway, see Tom Faulkner, *Architecture in Newcastle*, in Bill Lancaster and Robert Colls, *Newcastle upon Tyne, a Modern History*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co, 2001

³⁷ Town Planning Committee, *Planning- Progress and Purpose. A report of the Town Planning Committee*, Newcastle: Newcastle Town Planning Committee, n.d

³⁸ K.W.R. Baxter, *Report to the Public Relations Committee*, 09.06.1966 – on Newcastle Council's presence at the British Trade Fair at Oslo. The British Week event was repeated in 1964 (after a first such week in 1959), when Newcastle sent a three-dimensional model of its newly planned city centre to the display, *Demokraten*, 24.09.1964

³⁹ A rare moment of commentary hints at how travel informed the local authority: one Councillor explicitly referred to how the elderly were housed in Denmark in a debate on similar developments in Newcastle, when she pointed out the high standards of personal care provided in Århus, NCCM 01.03.1961, Mrs Wynne-Jones.

⁴⁰ M. Harloe et al, *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe & America*, London: Blackwell, 1995, p.206-207

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *op. cit.*, p.530-531

⁴³ This is the crux of the difference between social historical comparisons and social science investigations, although such divisions continue to be contentious. It is however not specific to the comparative approach. See P. Abrams, *Historical Sociology*, West Compton House: Open Books Publications, 1982; C. Tilly, *As Sociology Meets History*, Orlando: Academic Press, Inc., 1981; D.M. MacRaild and A. Taylor, *Social Theory and Social History*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004, ch.2 Fruits of a 'special relationship'? Historical Sociology.

⁴⁴ A. Power, *Hovels to High Rise, State housing in Europe since 1870*, London: Routledge, 1993; Tarja Cronberg, Tenants' Involvement in the Management of Social Housing in the Nordic Countries, *Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research*, 1986, (3), p.65-87

⁴⁵ Knud J.V. Jespersen, *A History of Denmark*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004, p.164

⁴⁶ Niels Finn Christiansen, Reformism within Danish Social Democracy until the Nineteen Thirties, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 3, 1978, p.297-322

⁴⁷ S. Kolstrup, *Fra kommunesocialisme til folkepension. Velfærdsstatens rødder*, Cph.: Selskabet til Forskning i Arbejderbevægelsens Historie, 1996, p.168-169

⁴⁸ A. Power implicitly identifies the Danish rural co-operative movement as an influence on the later housing association movement, *op. cit.*, p.248-249, 256

⁴⁹ A. Power, *op. cit.*, p.202

⁵⁰ Keith Jacobs, Historical Perspectives and Methodologies: their Relevance for Housing Studies?, *Housing, Theory and Society*, 2001, 18, (3/4), p.127-135

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² Ian Cole, Hidden from History? Housing Studies, the Perpetual Present and the Case of Social Housing in Britain, *Housing Studies*, 2006, 21 (2), p.283-295

⁵³ Tony Manzi has suggested that housing studies would benefit from the study of fiction and literature in a broad sense, see Tony Manzi, Bleak House: the Literary Imagination and Contemporary Housing Policy Paper presented at HSA Autumn Conference, Housing Imaginations: New Concepts, New Theories, New Researchers, Cardiff University, 4th September 2001, found at http://www.cf.ac.uk/cplan/conferences/has_sept01/manzi-t.pdf

Fiction has been suggested as an in-road to architectural readings, see Katherine Schonfield, The use of fiction to interpret architecture and urban space, *The Journal of Architecture*, Winter 2000, (5), p.369-389; Peter King, The Room to Panic: An Example of Film Criticism and Housing Research, *Housing, Theory and Society*, 2004, 21, p.27-35

⁵⁴ Studies such as Burnett' and Dauntton's works are frequently cited by scholars of housing policy, and Peter Malpass' work is strongly inflected with rigorous historical investigation. See John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985*, London: Routledge, 1991; Martin Dauntton, *House and Home in the Victorian City*, London: Edward Arnold, 1983; Peter Malpass, *Housing Associations and Housing Policy. A Historical Perspective*, Basingstoke: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 2000; Peter Malpass, *Housing & the Welfare State. The development of Housing Policy in Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005

⁵⁵ H. Kaelble, *Der historische Vergleich. Eine Einführung zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1999, ch. 5

⁵⁶ See the web-site www.ebst.dk

⁵⁷ Uffe Østergaard, *Europas ansigter*, Cph.: Munksgaard-Rosinante, 1992, p.79-81 – who interprets the Danish inheritance of the hegemony of peasant farmers as a mentalité that has marked the egalitarian principles of Danish social democracy.

⁵⁸ U. Østergaard *op. cit.*, p.51-83; S. S. Borish, *The Land of the Living: The Danish Folk High Schools and Denmark's non-Violent Path to Modernization*, Nevada City: Blue Dolphin Publishing Incorp., 1991, - Although Borish does not go as far as supporting statements on Danish individualism or territorialism he does suggest that the inheritance of rural culture is close to the surface of Danish culture, p.74.

⁵⁹ E.D. Simon, *The Smaller Democracies*, London: Victor Galloway Ltd., 1939, p.128

⁶⁰ Rod Rhodes, Traditions and Public Sector Reform: Comparing Britain and Denmark, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 22, (4), 1999, p.352-353

⁶¹ A. Ravetz has described the working class as passive and defensive during much of twentieth century council housing policy. See her *Council Housing and Culture. The history of a social experiment*, London: Routledge, 2000, p.5

⁶² David Byrne, Industrial culture in a post-industrial world, *City*, 2002, 6, (3), p.279-286

⁶³ When discussing the benefits of historical methods for housing studies, material and visual cultures are proposed one useful avenue for future work. Keith Jacobs, op. cit., p.133

⁶⁴ N.-F. Christiansen (1984), op. cit., p.19

⁶⁵ H. Kaelble makes it clear that types of comparison are rarely fully separate and overlaps are possible: the *Verstehende* comparison, the comparison of identity, the explanatory and evaluative comparison and the analytic comparison all carry traits that interlink in the exploratory comparison, op. cit., ch.4

⁶⁶ The title of a book by the Danish town planning psychologist Jan Gehl. Jan Gehl, *Life between Buildings*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1987

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